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General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

95th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 July 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Diarra (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda items 117 and 120 (continued)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I am grateful for the convening of this meeting of the General Assembly and would like to express my delegation's gratitude to the President of the Assembly for his determined effort to bring forward the United Nations reform agenda. The Assembly has already taken action in a significant number of areas, and subsequent work is progressing. Let me take this opportunity to assure the Assembly of Denmark's continued support for the reform of the United Nations.

At the 2005 world summit, heads of State or Government declared support for early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations. The conclusion of the sixtieth session is approaching, and so far we have made only limited progress on the Security Council reform issue. Allow me to briefly restate Denmark's position.

The present composition of the Security Council is a reflection of a world that no longer exists. The Council must continue to play a decisive role in the promotion of peace, security, human rights and democracy. But if it is to do so more effectively, broader representation is needed. Denmark supports expanding the Council by increasing the number of permanent members and non-permanent seats and by including developing and developed countries as permanent members. By doing so, we would make the voices representing the broader membership much stronger and thereby enhance the legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of Security Council decisions — effectiveness in the sense that the collective pressure to adhere to Council decisions would increase.

But reform of the Security Council goes far beyond the question of the expansion of the membership. It is also very much a matter of addressing the issue of working methods. The need for more transparency and inclusiveness in the work of the Security Council vis-à-vis the general membership is imminent.

In that regard, we welcome the work being done by the Security Council on improving its working methods, which includes efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, as well as stronger interaction and dialogue with non-Council members. We look forward to the full implementation of the improved working methods and welcome the intention expressed by the Security

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Council to continue to consider ways to improve its working methods.

As we all know too well, this issue has been on our agenda for 13 years. It is time now to move from reflection to action. It is time to compromise. We need a stronger United Nations — a United Nations better suited to addressing the new threats and challenges the world is facing — and reform of the Security Council is an integral part of that effort.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): The Uganda delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

On the issue of the expansion of the Security Council, Africa's position is clear and unambiguous — we call for no less than two permanent seats with a veto, and five non-permanent seats. We have listened to other proposals, but we still maintain our position. One may say that we are not realistic or that we are obstinate, but ours is a principled stand. We are the only continent without a permanent seat on the Security Council, despite our size and influence. True, the existence of veto-wielding powers on the Security Council is an anomaly and anachronistic, and ideally, that arrangement should not be emulated by extending veto to new entrants, but so long as the veto exists, we do not want to join as second-class so-called permanent members.

We think we can wage the fight in two stages. First, the new permanent members should have the right of veto. In the second stage, we would strive to abolish the veto and have a truly democratic Security Council. In the meantime, let us tackle a less problematic issue — the expansion of the category of non-permanent members. I believe that could be done.

My delegation also thinks we can improve on the working methods of the Security Council, since that does not involve an amendment of the Charter. In that regard, my delegation is of the view that a draft resolution entitled "Improving the working methods of the Security Council", submitted by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Singapore, deserves support.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): On behalf of the delegation of Nigeria, I have the honour to express our gratitude to Mr. Eliasson for scheduling this General Assembly debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, as well as the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. This coincides with Nigeria's expectations that Security Council reform will not be permanently deferred. Indeed, it is also consistent with the decision of our leaders in September 2005.

At the outset, let me state that Nigeria fully associates itself with the African position conveyed by the Permanent Representative of Algeria this morning.

It has always been the view of Nigeria that the reform of the United Nations would not be complete without a fundamental reform and increase in the size and the composition of the Security Council. Moreover, such reform should accommodate the legitimate claim of Africa to representation on the Council in the permanent membership category. We believe that such an outcome would reflect the new realities and thereby enable the Council to gain in stature and credibility, as well as ensure that its decisions attract the wider support of the international community.

Africa's position on Security Council reform has been defined in the decisions taken by African heads of State and Government at the fifth and sixth ordinary sessions of the Assembly of the African Union in Sirte in July 2005, Khartoum in January 2006, and most recently in Banjul. The fact is that the issues raised in the debate on Security Council reform, for which we have canvassed over the years and in the past months, remain clear. Just as the General Assembly took the decision to establish the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, the time is ripe to act decisively on Security Council reform. It would do a great disservice to our Organization if Member States were to continue to prevaricate on this matter.

Nigeria respects the viewpoints of those Member States that insist on the need for consensus before such a decision is taken. However, we equally recognize that, in the greater national interests of our respective peoples, we rarely allow the search for consensus to inhibit important decisions. It is essential therefore that, in the interests and for the future of our Organization, we make every effort to bring all Member States on board on this issue without losing sight of our primary goal. That may well entail some element of flexibility, but flexibility that is informed by a shared view that Council reform in all its aspects is long overdue.

If we proceed along that path, Nigeria is confident that we should, in the immediate future, achieve that goal and thereby not only rekindle the hopes and confidence of humankind in the United Nations, but also prove wrong its vocal critics who wrongly argue that Member States, individually and collectively, cannot rise to the challenges of true multilateralism. Let us send forth from this hallowed Hall a clear message of our common resolve not to let slip yet another opportunity to address this matter once and for all.

There are also those who believe that the States Members of this Organization should be content with merely tinkering with the working methods of the Security Council, and that that would better serve the interests of the broad membership. Although the full implications of such a position for the overall United Nations reform have been the subject of discussions and informal consultations in the past, Nigeria considers it necessary to restate that such an approach would hardly address the fundamental inequity that the Council, as presently constituted, represents.

I wish to recall that it was against this background that Nigeria last December resubmitted, on behalf of Africa, the African draft resolution on Security Council reform. For us, the reform of the Security Council should bring gains to all regions. It should also address the fundamental imbalance in the Council's composition.

In the pursuit of that objective, Nigeria maintains an open mind. We remain open to negotiations. However, for such negotiations to bear fruit, they must be based on the recognition of the fundamental view that, as Africa is the only region without representation in the permanent membership category of the Security Council, its legitimate aspirations should be addressed. Nigeria therefore identifies with those Member States whose initiatives boldly and largely take into account Africa's primary interests and concerns on Security Council reform.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): On behalf of the Brazilian delegation, I would like to thank the presidency for convening this plenary meeting. Its timeliness is determined not only by the importance of the issues themselves, but also by the need for the General Assembly to fully comply with the relevant provisions of the outcome document as regards the issue of Security Council reform. We expect progress on this long-standing question, just as we have advanced in resolving other important issues relating to the institutional reform of our Organization.

In matters of international peace and security, the continued importance of the Security Council rests upon its unique position in international law and politics, its pivotal role within the body of law relating to the use of force, and its power to determine and enforce any measure necessary to restore international peace and security.

It is a well-known fact that, after the end of the cold war, the Security Council became much more active. Over 1,000 resolutions have been adopted over the past 15 years, compared to 644 in the previous 45 years. Yet, that remarkable increase in activity has not, unfortunately, resulted in a comparable reduction in threats to international peace and security.

Current events in different regions of the world underscore the need for the Security Council fully to perform the role envisaged for it by the United Nations Charter. The need for effective collective measures to re-establish confidence and settle international disputes is even more evident at a time when regional tensions continue to escalate, conflicts continue to be a daily reality, and civilian populations continue to suffer mounting casualties.

The expansion of the Council so that it may more adequately reflect contemporary realities and the present composition of the Organization is therefore indispensable. Only a profound reform that corrects the current imbalances in its structure, resulting in a Council that is more democratic and representative, with new members in its permanent and non-permanent categories from both the developing and the developed world, will confer on the Council the degree of credibility and legitimacy necessary for it to more effectively address the new threats and challenges we face.

Nearly all Members of the Organization agree that there is a pressing need for change. A large majority has emerged with similar or coinciding views on what a reformed Council should look like. That body of opinion cuts across regional and political groupings and includes two permanent members of the Security Council, whose active engagement was recently reaffirmed in the Franco-United Kingdom joint communiqué of 9 June.

All that take part in that majority view are fully aware of the issues at stake. Brazil continues to work within the context of the Group of Four and with the membership at large with a view to achieving an expansion of the Security Council that reflects the Group's basic positions and assures an expansion that is both meaningful and workable.

The most important aspect of Security Council reform is that of membership and representation. That does not mean belittling the need to update and adapt its working methods. We have our own proposals on the subject and we acknowledge the serious efforts being made by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" — but unless the question of membership is adequately dealt with, fundamental issues, such as the imbalance in representation and the need for greater legitimacy, will remain. In order to truly make a difference, Security Council reform must address that body's current structural imbalance. Any partial solution will simply perpetuate its legitimacy deficit.

Proposals on the table share the concern over the need for further measures to ensure the accountability, transparency and inclusiveness of the work of the Security Council. Ideas are coming together in the recognition that developing countries should take part in the membership increase in both categories and that working methods should be properly addressed. The time has thus come for a process of dialogue and consultations among those that share many similarities and concerns with a view to reaching an early decision on the issue. Such a process would amount to a significant step in the consideration of the issue and would facilitate the necessary convergence of positions.

Our common goal should be to bring about a reform that allows for a correction of the historical imbalance in the composition of the Council, which today excludes entire regions of the developing world from the permanent member category. Terms such as "general agreement", "overwhelming majority" and "broadest possible consensus" have been used to refer to the threshold needed for the approval of matters relating to reform.

The search for consensus, however, must not become, as some would like, an end in itself. Consensus in a reform process should be sought on the basis of majority positions. In that process, all points of view should be respected. Consensus is indeed desirable, but the recent creation of both the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council reminds us that consensus is not really required by our Charter and is not politically indispensable. It must not, in any case, serve as an excuse not to take a decision.

Those who believe in Security Council reform as a way of transforming the Organization, allowing it to become more effective in tackling current threats and challenges, can count on us not only to carry forth this vision but also to struggle for it to become the next major achievement in the Organization's programme of reforms. Inaction contributes to the weakening of collective security measures and of multilateralism as a whole. It will be up to all of us to decide on this most fundamental issue of our time. It is only fitting that we should do so in the General Assembly, the only universally representative international body — and do so with the use of all democratic means.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This session of the General Assembly is taking place against the backdrop of far-reaching reform processes. This work, despite the difficult and often heated debate, confirms the need to find the broadest possible agreement among Member States — ideally, consensus — to achieve progress on the whole range of United Nations reforms. That approach is fully relevant and indeed necessary with regard to reform of the Security Council. Differences in positions on this issue continue to be large, and none of the proposed models for enlarging the Security Council yet enjoys the necessary support from United Nations Members. We are convinced that we should continue to seek a common denominator on the basis of collective efforts.

It is in the interest of all not to allow any expansion of the membership of the Security Council that could have a negative impact on other elements of the reform process in the Organization or on the broad mandate of the United Nations in addressing urgent international issues. At the same time, it is difficult not agree with the view that, without Security Council reform, the overall reform of the United Nations will be incomplete.

Russia's basic position on this issue has not changed. We are ready to conscientiously consider any possible sensible approach to expanding the membership of the Security Council, if it is based on

the broadest possible agreement within the United Nations, beyond the legally required two-thirds majority of members of the General Assembly.

A key element continues to be the need to increase the effectiveness of the Council and to provide it with a more representative character, but not at the expense of its effectiveness, since it is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is for that reason that we advocate maintaining a limited membership of the Council. We are convinced that it would be counterproductive to limit the prerogatives of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the right of veto.

We support, and actively take part in, the Council's efforts, based on the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), to improve its working methods. In recent times, the members of the Security Council have made progress in improving the transparency and effectiveness of the work of the Council. We highly commend the significant work by the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Oshima.

Following six months of its work, on 19 July 2006, the Security Council endorsed a note by its President (S/2006/507), which laid out the positive developments with respect to the functioning of the Council. We would like to stress that any initiative to improve the working methods of the Council not based on consensus and with the support of all members would not provide any progress in the comprehensive reform of the Security Council, and would not be a positive contribution to resolving the problem of achieving agreement on all aspects of Security Council reform. We hope that that will not be the case.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking you, Sir, and all delegations for your expressions of sympathy and solidarity regarding this week's tsunami in Indonesia's Java island, in which hundreds have been killed and thousands rendered homeless. We are truly grateful for your thoughtfulness and support.

I also wish to express my thanks for the convening of this debate under agenda items 117 and 120.

The United Nations has an agenda full of items that have been a focus of attention for considerable periods of time. This issue is one of the longest-standing, most intricate and most important of them. We have been discussing this issue with great intensity for a long time, and my delegation is concerned at the fact that our efforts have not yet resulted in much progress.

It is well known that Indonesia strongly advocates comprehensive reform of the Security Council, with the sole objective of making it more representative, efficient, transparent and accountable. It will be recalled that, last September, world leaders too endorsed the early realization of this objective. We believe that this reform will strengthen the Council and enhance its legitimacy and credibility, which are important factors in mobilizing Member States in the implementation of its decisions.

In this statement, we would like to focus on the working methods of the Council. This part of the comprehensive reform of the Council is equally significant and deserves the same attention as the issue of the expansion of Security Council membership. My delegation believes that, while the question of representation on the Council is of the greatest importance, we must keep in mind at all times why it is important. It is to ensure that the Council which emerges in the course of the reform process carries with it the credibility of the entire international community by becoming more efficient, transparent, representative and accountable.

In the past, regrettably, the methods that the Council has sometimes adopted in its work, such as unscheduled debates, selective notification of some debates and the reluctance to discuss certain issues in open debate, have left many Member States with a lot of questions. We feel that those flaws need to be, and can be, corrected. My delegation believes that the ability of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security would be strengthened if the Council encouraged greater participation and contributions by Member States in its work.

To this end, we note that the Council is currently taking steps to address the concerns of Member States on this issue. It remains our view that the Council should increase the number of open meetings at which the views of Member States are heard as input into the work of the Council. That is in contrast to open meetings where members speak moments before the Council announces a decision or adopts a resolution on

the subject at hand. It would be more meaningful for such a decision or adoption to be considered with the views of Member States in mind.

Indeed, there is no doubt that the credibility of the Council will be further strengthened when it also engages in regular, substantive exchanges of views with the other major organs, particularly the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Along with consultations with Council members and non-members, that would deeply enrich the pool of information and ideas that the Council can tap into for its decision-making.

We also share the view that briefings by special envoys or representatives of the Secretary-General or by the committees of the Council should take place as much as possible in an open format.

The principal business of the Council being the maintenance of international peace and security, we believe that it serves the Council best also to strengthen its relationship with troop contributors through regular interaction, rather than during the crush of mission planning or mandate negotiation. Such interaction, needless to say, would also be helpful in the necessary transitions that often occur in the life of a peacekeeping mission.

With reference to the substance of the Council's discussions, I would like to reiterate the necessity that the Council remain within the purview of its Charter mandate. It must scrupulously avoid the temptation to address such issues as those belonging within the purview of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council.

Furthermore, in the interest of accountability and the spirit of the Charter, my delegation would like to reiterate its concern about the quality of the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly. For many years, many delegations, including my own, have indicated their desire for a report with more depth, information and analysis. Regrettably, this desire has not been met, and the report of the Security Council has continued to be no more than information and statistics that most delegations already possess. The annual report should not be treated as a bureaucratic formality for one simple reason: neither the business of the General Assembly nor the maintenance of international peace and security is a formality.

Finally, I wish to underline the concern of my delegation concerning the process of the selection of the Secretary-General. Few other issues can better reflect the commitment of any Member State to true reform of the Organization than transparency in the selection of its principal officer. Member States would therefore like to see Council efforts to increase the transparency of this process, as well as an enhanced role for the General Assembly.

Mrs. Holguín (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the General Assembly, for organizing this debate, which invites us once again to reflect on the issue of Security Council reform, an exercise that has always been desirable, important and necessary. My thanks go also to you, Sir, for presiding over today's meetings.

The balance sheet of our collective work on reform of the Organization is positive. We have new organs that we hope will help overcome the difficult and complex situations of today's world. We have started a process of in-depth review of the administrative functioning of the Organization; we believe this is necessary to revitalize it and provide it with the dynamism it needs.

However, the zeal to reform has minimized the negotiation process through which lasting consensus is reached. The move from negotiation to intergovernmental consultation has weakened the capacity for agreement and mutual understanding. Negotiation enables one to know and appreciate another's perception, but consultations through facilitators and speeches do not allow the degree of interaction and understanding necessary to achieve the solid consensus required for long-term solutions.

We believe we have to resume intergovernmental negotiation. We believe that only in that way will the trust and the relationships based on cooperation that must characterize this unique multilateral and universal organ be renewed, and only in that way will we have solid organ that respond to the major challenges we face today.

In this context, I return to the issue of Security Council reform. We see that yesterday's differences are still present today. We see that the determination to achieve a reform inclusive of the majority and with firm respect for sovereign equality is more valid than ever before. The use of closed formats to reach agreements in the past has yielded neither positive

results nor foundations on which lasting agreements can be built.

We believe that Security Council reform lacking consensus will only bring greater divisions and perhaps even the gradual loss of the Council's legitimacy because of a composition that establishes and perpetuates privileges that run counter to the principles of sovereign equality and the reality of today's international system.

We believe that the reform of that principal organ must be inclusive and transparent. There must be open and direct negotiation among Member States until a formula satisfactory to all and guaranteeing the unity of the Members of the Organization is found.

Colombia, along with the Uniting for Consensus movement, has proposed a formula that seeks to integrate the majorities through regional autonomy taking account of the characteristics of each group. Our proposal is based on giving each region the capacity to present the members that will represent it in the Council, as well as the frequency of their rotation. Our proposal is democratic, allows for accountability, is flexible and fair and gives regions the importance they have in today's world. Our proposal is a good-faith effort to avoid an all-or-nothing showdown, as was said by Ambassador Allan Rock of Canada during the introduction of draft resolution A/59/L.68 (see A/59/PV.115).

We know there are other alternatives. That is why we believe that through committed and direct negotiation among States we can find a consensus that helps rebuild the trust so much of which has been lost in recent months, but which is ever more necessary.

Our proposal, as we have reiterated many times as active members of the Uniting for Consensus movement and in our national capacity, is to begin negotiating directly and transparently among States, without intermediaries, until we find a consensus formula that, after 13 years of trying, will reform the Security Council.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in this debate under agenda items 117, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council", and 120, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". We view this as a timely opportunity to further discuss aspects related to the reform of the United Nations, in keeping with the mandate entrusted to us by our leaders as part of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

At the world summit, our leaders supported early reform of the Security Council and recognized such reform as an essential element in the overall effort to reform the United Nations. Now that there has been progress on reform, including in the areas of peace, development and human rights and in certain institutional aspects of the work of the Secretariat, there should now be some real movement in terms of the security aspect of the equation. There can be no question that any meaningful and comprehensive reform of the United Nations must contemplate reform of the international security architecture in order to strengthen the reform already carried out in other areas.

At this juncture, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the work carried out by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, including by the current Vice-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of the Bahamas and of the Netherlands.

Jamaica reaffirms the responsibility entrusted to the Security Council under Article 24 of the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, acting on behalf of the wider membership of the Organization. We are of the view that it is necessary for the Council to be reformed in order to make it more open, transparent, democratic, accountable and effective.

We are all agreed that geopolitical realities have changed fundamentally since the establishment of the United Nations. It is therefore only logical that the Council should reflect the contemporary international community as a whole, based on equitable geographic representation and the increased representation of developing countries.

It is on that basis that Jamaica has taken the position that there should be expansion in both categories of the membership of the Council with increased representation from all regional groups. As a principle, we share the view that there should be no discrimination in the rights, privileges and status accorded to new members of the Council.

We acknowledge that there have been improvements in the way the Council conducts its business, one recent example of which has been the information provided by respective Presidents of the Council on the procedure and process for the selection of a new Secretary-General to lead this Organization. We also note that the Permanent Representative of Japan has been conducting consultations within the Council on ways to improve its working methods and look forward to receiving continued updates on the work of the Council in that regard.

We continue to underscore the importance of transparency and accountability in the work of the Council. It is also imperative to affirm that the development of norms related to international law as well as treaty-making are best left to the deliberations of the General Assembly and the involvement of the wider membership. The division of labour between the two organs must be respected.

In accordance with the principles of the Charter, it is important that the Security Council consider and act upon matters that pose an immediate threat to international peace and security. In that context, the Council should be prepared to take urgent action in situations that endanger the lives of civilians and which have the potential to result in humanitarian crises, particularly in circumstances where vital infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed. In all such situations, the permanent members of the Council should be prepared to act in an even-handed manner and limit their use of the veto.

We are now in the second decade of discussions on Security Council reform. It is perhaps time for decisive and not incremental action to make real the process of reform of the Security Council. In essence, reform should seek to enhance the legitimacy of the Council through an expanded membership that reflects balance and diversity and is based on respect for the principle of equitable representation.

To be truly effective, however, reform should go beyond expansion towards a more fundamental realignment of the existing hierarchical structure of the Council, which, as currently constituted, merely perpetuates the disparities in the global distribution of power and wealth.

We should therefore strive to act collectively on this resolve before much more time has passed.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the beginning of this year, various United Nations reforms, such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, have all enjoyed positive progress. Many new measures have been adopted for Secretariat management reform and the ongoing consultations on mandate review, the revitalization of the General Assembly and the counter-terrorism strategy. As has been pointed out by the President of the General Assembly, those results have been achieved through the common efforts of all Member States.

The Security Council shoulders the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The greater effectiveness of the Security Council, as one of the principal United Nations organs, has a bearing on world peace and security, as well as on the interests of all Member States. Strengthening the Council's role and authority through reform would enhance the United Nations role, promote multilateral approaches and accelerate the democratization of international relations. To that end, China has consistently and explicitly supported necessary and rational reform of the Security Council.

President Hu Jintao comprehensively set forth China's position on that issue at last year's world summit. Since the beginning of this year, China has reiterated its position on many occasions. Keeping current developments in mind, I now wish to emphasize the following three main points.

First, Security Council reform should be carried out on the basis of broad consensus if progress is to be maintained. Since the beginning of this year, a wide spectrum of discussions and consultations has been conducted on Council reform. Though a proposal acceptable to the overwhelming majority of the Member States has not yet been produced, all the parties have carefully summed up experiences and, on the basis of previous proposals, intensified their efforts to reach the broadest possible consensus. That is worthy of our appreciation and encouragement. It is the correct way to guide reform to ultimate success. China supports all measures that will advance incremental reform on the basis of broad consensus among Member States.

Secondly, Council reform should not focus exclusively on expansion. The purpose of reform is to enhance the authority and representation of the

Council. We therefore need to appropriately enlarge its composition and reform its working methods in a practical and scientific manner so as to fully reflect the constructive views of the large number of non-Council members, regional organizations and civil society. Some countries have put forward a number of suggestions and proposals that deserve our attentive consideration. At the same time, we should encourage the Council to improve itself in its own practice.

Thirdly, the key to Council reform lies in improving the representation of developing countries. Reform is not a power game, let alone a private bargain among big Powers. The many developing countries, especially those of Africa, are seriously underrepresented in the Council. Their voice is rather limited in the Council and they have few opportunities to participate fully in its decision-making. That should be the priority in the Council's enlargement. Undoubtedly, it is hard to adopt a proposal that addresses the concerns of only a few big Powers but fails to give equal treatment to or even ignores the voice of developing countries, especially medium-sized and small countries.

The sixty-first session of the General Assembly will open in September. Leaders or foreign ministers of Member States will gather once again in New York to discuss plans for United Nations reform and the implementation of the consensus reached at last year's summit. Member States will have the time and opportunity to engage in an in-depth exchange of views and to seek broad consensus on United Nations reform.

The Open-ended Working Group has served for many years as an effective platform for exchanges and discussions on Security Council reform, especially with regard to expansion. It should continue to play its important role in narrowing differences and increasing common understanding. China is willing to work with all others and actively supports the efforts of the President of the General Assembly to promote progress in Council reform and all other areas of United Nations reform.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have almost completed the entire reform process of the United Nations, but we still have before us a political issue that is both sensitive and of great significance: the reform of the Security Council.

The violations of international peace and security that we have witnessed in recent days, especially in the Middle East, should lead us to reflect on the urgent need to improve the working methods and legitimacy of the Security Council.

The veto comes once more to mind. As Argentina has said many times, the veto power and the other privileges of the permanent members not only infringe on the legal equality of States but also affect the effectiveness of the Council and the possibility to reach consensus when confronting conflicts such as those we are seeing today.

National interests of States must also accommodate global interests related to international peace and security, in the context of the legitimacy that can be granted only by international law. As sovereign States, we are obliged to be responsive to world public opinion and the international community when they call for peace and security.

Let us recall that our achievements in reform were based on discussion, on the search for comprehensive solutions and on consensus. For that, we needed a positive and flexible attitude. Not a single State, not even the most powerful, was able to obtain everything it wanted, and that is a fact that we must bear in mind during this debate. We can no longer approach Security Council reform with stubbornness and inflexibility. It is neither a zero sum game nor one of winners and losers. We need, inevitably, to reach compromise. We need to accept that intransigence has led us to paralysis in Security Council reform, and we are witnessing its consequences now.

We stress that this is not an issue to be put to vote. It is a fundamental change to an essential element of the Charter and of the Organization. As some other speakers have mentioned, we must begin a serious negotiation process and put an end to pressure, speeches and stubborn positions. We believe that the time for negotiation has arrived.

Once again, we repeat our position that increasing the permanent membership through a single definitive decision is an unfair solution, and it would be pointless to try to reach such a solution. We have a number of draft resolutions and ideas on the table. There are various possible ways to reach agreement and variations that would accommodate all of our interests. Why do we not initiate a dialogue that is both pragmatic and positive? We strongly believe that the proposal put forward by the Uniting for Consensus

group offers a possible way forward towards an understanding.

The sincere dialogue that I mentioned could take place within the Working Group or in any other informal setting. Perhaps we could also think about initiating it at the regional level. Most of the political problems that prevent us from moving forward lie in historical perceptions and geopolitical considerations in various regions.

With those considerations, my delegation wishes to reaffirm our support to you, Sir, in order to make progress in the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Palous (Czech Republic): For more than 10 years, the United Nations has been engaged in attempts to adjust its Security Council to new geopolitical realities — and so far, to no avail. The core structure of the Council still reflects the situation of the end of the Second World War, some 60 years ago. Since then, not only have new Powers and important actors emerged, but the nature of the threats to international peace and security has considerably changed. Today's world is facing new threats, such as terrorism, in addition to the more traditional conflicts between States, which are of no lesser concern even if they seem to be less numerous.

To address those challenges effectively, the Security Council should become a more representative, transparent and efficient body. The reform and expansion of the Security Council is unavoidable, and the Czech Republic has been consistently working for change. We are aware that there have been many different opinions in that respect. However, we must all work together to ensure the better functioning and greater authority of the Council. The Czech Republic shares the majority view that the absence of reform not only undermines the ability of the Council to act but possibly also hampers progress in other areas of United Nations reform.

We believe that in selecting new permanent members of the Council, one should take into account the overall role the candidates play in world affairs, their political, economic or military strength and their readiness to participate in safeguarding international peace and security and assuming greater financial responsibility vis-à-vis the United Nations. In particular, we have been supporting, through the years, the aspirations of Germany and Japan for permanent seats in the Council, along with the allocation of other new permanent seats to Latin America, Asia and Africa. There is no doubt that new permanent members from among the developing countries will help to enhance the credibility of the Council.

Consistent with its long-term position on Security Council reform, the Czech Republic — one of the original sponsors of last year's draft resolution by the so-called Group of Four (G-4) — continues to support that approach. We believe that the G-4 proposal offers a realistic and viable model for the Council's expansion and the upgrade of its working methods, a model that still has the potential to win the required majority of Member States, if not support from them all.

Mr. Cordovez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador firmly supports all attempts and initiatives for reform of the United Nations. In that spirit, we have participated for many years in all restructuring efforts that have taken place in the Organization.

Ecuador has not limited itself to supporting reform texts in resolutions of the General Assembly and other organs, but has also supported with conviction the very few amendments to the Charter that have been adopted in the past. I refer in particular to that which increased the number of Security Council members from 11 to 15 and which showed that when one truly wants to accomplish something, it is possible to do so. In addition, we supported the amendments with regard to the composition of the Economic and Social Council.

My country believes that Security Council reform, in order to grant the Council greater authority, efficiency and relevance in dealing with international problems, is the key to ensuring that the United Nations can, in today's world, play the role its founders designed for it and that Member States hope it will fulfil. We need to respond to public opinion that truly clamours for the Organization to respond effectively to the challenges that daily, and with increasing frequency, confront international peace and security. The Security Council should be the guardian and custodian of political stability in the world, the main vehicle for multilateral measures to resolve conflict and the main forum for consultation and debate to clarify and solve international confrontations and disputes.

So that the Security Council can do that more effectively, it is essential and urgent that its present

composition be changed, precisely to bring it up to date with the world. It is the lack of representativity that has most eroded the Council's authority and efficiency. We therefore applaud the initiative and the efforts that Brazil, Germany, India and Japan have been carrying out for some time in that context.

Ecuador has been a Security Council member twice. Between the first time, in the early 1960s, from 1960 to 1961, and the second time, in the early 1990s, from 1991 to 1992, 30 years passed. We were thus able to see the effects of the fact that, in a world that had substantively changed, the Council's composition did not reflect the new realities, the changing circumstances of international problems and the new challenges facing the international community. Another 15 years have passed since then, and the situation is the same.

For all of those reasons, we will support with enthusiasm and conviction any proposal that seeks to change the Security Council's composition to make it more representative. We also favour the adoption of measures to improve the Council's working methods to make its deliberations more transparent so that its inter-institutional relations can be more harmonious. We are participating in this debate with sincere zeal to help find the way. We will support any action aimed at reconciling the various positions on this issue so that, with the necessary effort and political will, we will find a formula for Security Council recomposition that satisfies everyone.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium has always taken an active part in the debates on Security Council reform. If we are doing that again today, it is because we believe, more than ever before, that the status quo is not an option. Furthermore, the lack of movement in this area is undermining the Council's authority. Expectations have been created — in particular during the 2005 summit — and failing to respond to them could needlessly give rise to misunderstandings.

If Belgium is asking for Council reform, it is not doing so for the simple pleasure of reforming, but out of concern, as I said, for the Council's authority. That authority is based on two key concepts: legitimacy and effectiveness.

With respect, first, to legitimacy, the world changes, and with it the centres of power. New actors rise; new regional Powers emerge. It is appropriate that the Security Council — which has the primary responsibility for world stability — should reflect this new geopolitical reality in its composition to a greater extent.

Turning next to effectiveness, let us make no mistake: what we can gain in legitimacy by expanding the Security Council membership we can lose in terms of effectiveness. Therefore, we must ensure that the scope and the nature of such expansion do not undermine the effectiveness in decision-making that characterizes the Council today.

As everyone knows, both aspects of Security Council reform — expansion and working methods — are closely linked and together determine the legitimacy and effectiveness that I just mentioned. Discussions of its working methods are under way within the Council itself, and we have just learned of their results with great interest. In addition, we have heard the excellent suggestions made by our colleagues in the group of five small nations.

At this point, I do not wish to get into the substance of the issue of working methods, except for one aspect: the right of the veto. Here too, Belgium asks for a nuanced approach. To say only that this right should be abolished is simplistic, as is the reverse. In those who possess it, this right engenders a commitment and a specific responsibility without which the Council would be weakened rather than strengthened. Maintaining the principle of the veto is one thing; specifying and adapting the modalities for its exercise are another. Belgium believes that we must take that approach in order to find the point of equilibrium that, here too, should reconcile legitimacy and effectiveness.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): There is no doubt that during the present session of the General Assembly, progress has been made in the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals, whose priorities were set out in the Millennium Declaration and in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) adopted by our heads of State or Government last September. During this period, the Assembly has focused on various areas of United Nations reform. We have accomplished a number of achievements, particularly the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. Critical reform of the Secretariat has also begun. Other areas remain to be addressed, including the review of mandates, reform of the Economic and

Social Council, the definition of a counter-terrorism strategy, Security Council reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly.

In this statement, I should like to emphasize two critical issues: terrorism, one of the main challenges facing the international community; and Security Council reform.

The Secretary-General has submitted a report on a global counter-terrorism strategy (A/60/825). To complement the reactions of Member States following the report's publication, I must say that the description of terrorism contained in that report applies to many terrorist acts that have claimed thousands of innocent, civilian lives throughout the world. There is indeed an international network that finances, supports and executes terrorist acts. International efforts must therefore be undertaken to counteract terrorism wherever it occurs.

We must admit that Iraq has now become a major front in the war against terrorism. Whatever the causes of the terrorist acts being committed in Iraq, they are claiming innocent civilian lives. The magnitude of terrorism in Iraq cannot be justified in any way or by any argument.

There have been 5,815 victims and many thousands of injured over the last two months alone. The description of terrorism offered by our heads of State in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) applies to the kind of terrorism that we are witnessing now in Iraq. We therefore stress that terrorism must be condemned in all its forms and manifestations, whoever commits it, wherever it occurs and whatever its objectives.

With regard to Security Council reform, we must say at the outset that in September 2005, our heads of State declared that Security Council reform was needed as a first stage in the overall reform of the United Nations, with a view to making the Security Council more representative and transparent. The General Assembly has been considering this issue since 1993. Despite the progress in the discussion and the ideas that have since come forward with regard to the process of reform, no final decisions have been taken with regard to the implementation of those ideas. Doubtless, part of this failure is related to the fact that we have established a link between improving the Security Council's working methods and enlarging its membership. Negotiations reached an advanced stage in the latter part of 2005, and a number of draft resolutions were submitted to the General Assembly on the reform of the Security Council and, in particular, with regard to increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council.

Reform of the Security Council is without doubt an important element of the ongoing overall reform of the United Nations. We consider that improving the working methods of the Security Council will allow us to reach consensus on the enlargement of the Council. We attach particular importance to expanding the number of permanent and non-permanent seats so that the body becomes more representative and democratic without impinging on its efficiency and effectiveness. At the same time, however, we do need to improve the working methods of the Security Council, because this would have an impact on the interests of most if not all States Members of the United Nations, while increasing the number of permanent seats would affect the interests of only a limited number of States.

Over recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of public meetings of the Security Council and further participation in the debate by States not members of the Council when the discussion concerned their specific interests. We hope that Member States will also be enabled to take part in closed consultations of the Security Council, pursuant to article 31 of the Charter, to allow for transparency and openness in the Council's work.

It is also our hope that there will be an increased role for regional organizations. Most of the conflicts which threaten international peace and security are regional in nature, and a greater role should therefore be given to regional organizations in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter, provided that this does not impinge on the prerogatives and responsibilities of the Security Council with regard to international peace and security, and provided that respect for human rights is enhanced.

When we talk about improving the Council's working methods, we also need to consider the sanctions regimes and the use of the veto. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) addressed the main aspects of sanctions regimes, stating that a balance needed to be struck between their effectiveness and their impact on civilian population. Sanctions should be implemented and monitored in an effective way and should be regularly reviewed. Sanctions

should only be applied for a limited period of time and account should be taken of their long-term impact on the targeted population.

The objective of sanctions is to ensure international peace and security without recourse to force and to rectify errors in the behaviour of regimes that the Security Council considers not to be respecting its resolutions. Sanctions are not aimed at destroying the social fabric of nations, nor are they a collective punishment of peoples or States. They are rather punishment directed at specific individuals and regimes.

We attach particular importance to the sanctions committees that have been established pursuant to resolutions of the Security Council, particularly resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1518 (2003). We believe that an improvement in the work of those sanctions committees could ensure the absence of collective punishment.

As regards the reform of the right of veto, we believe that work on cluster II issues should focus on improving the way the veto is used. Vetoes should be strictly limited to issues under Chapter VII of the Charter. The veto should not be used in cases of genocide or massive violations of human rights. We believe that a system of "indicative voting", before formal voting, whereby Council members could call for a public indication of positions on a proposed action, as proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (see A/59/565, para. 257) is of interest here. It has previously been proposed that the right of veto should apply only if at least two permanent members exercise it. That too is an interesting idea which requires examination.

We hope that the United Nations will be an Organization capable of assuming its responsibilities in achieving the purposes for which it was set up. To ensure that the Organization does this, it must continue the process of comprehensive reform in the interest of all Member States. Reform should, in particular, create a balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, respecting the prerogatives and mandates of each and avoiding any overlap between them. Here we note that the Security Council has of late been impinging upon the General Assembly, which is, however, the more democratic and representative body.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoken in Arabic*): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion of agenda items 117 and 120, which, respectively, concern the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, and follow-up to the outcome of the September 2005 Millennium Summit.

The Security Council was established as a tool to avert global threats and to guarantee and maintain international peace and security. It is the only body in the United Nations system which can authorize the collective use of force. It should therefore be representative, responsible, effective, transparent and flexible. More important, it should be capable of adapting to the new challenges which the international community is facing and should better reflect present-day realities.

For this reason, the expansion of Security Council membership is imperative. The United Nations has spent nearly 13 years discussing changes in the Council. We stress that the Government of the State of Qatar sincerely supports all constructive efforts to reform and strengthen the institutions of the United Nations, because we are fully confident that there can be no genuine United Nations reform without reform of the Security Council.

Security Council reform is long overdue. With its present composition, the Council cannot reflect the political and geographical reality of our world, as it did in 1945. The number of United Nations Member States has risen from 51 in 1945 to 192 at present. That steady increase underlines the importance of transforming this very important body and making it more representative of today's world, through the increase and expansion of its permanent and non-permanent membership, particularly from among the ranks of the developing countries. That would increase the possibility for all Member States to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to fulfil their Charter commitments. It would be a fount of great determination and confidence on the part of all Member States, and it would be a first step towards completing the reform of the United Nations.

My Government, under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, would like to emphasize its support for the efforts of the President and of the Secretary-General to reform the Organization, with particular emphasis on the good work towards reform of the Security Council. In

calling for such reform, we believe that the main principles of the United Nations Charter remain as valid now as ever. In this context, in his statement at the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005, His Highness said:

> "Reform of the Security Council and expansion of its membership have become an integral part of activating and invigorating the role of the United Nations itself. We are, therefore, looking forward to more deliberations among the Member States concerning the Council's functioning and its relations with other bodies of the Organization, notably the Economic and Social Council" (*A/60/PV.4, p. 27*).

We need to make the United Nations more active and more effective. For the Security Council to be legitimate and representative, it must better reflect our contemporary world. It must guarantee the legitimate interests of developing countries, in addition to those of the major economic and political Powers. Enlargement of the Security Council must not undermine its effectiveness. The way to guarantee this is to restrict the use of the veto, or to abolish it.

In that respect, the failure to adopt a Security Council draft resolution a few days ago owing to the use of that procedure — a draft resolution aimed at halting the continuous attacks and other operations against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and in other parts of the occupied Palestinian territories, and the killing of civilians and the destruction of civilian residential areas and infrastructure by Israel, the occupying Power — has led to an unprecedented and unforgettable deterioration of the situation.

Here, we cannot fail to mention the flagrant attack on a brotherly country, Lebanon, the complete destruction of residential property and infrastructure and the increase in the number of civilian casualties. We urge Israel to halt this illegal aggression and to cease the bloodletting and inhumane attacks on Lebanese territory. The Security Council should not carry over this crisis from one meeting to the next but should consider the root causes of the problem and understand the importance of implementing Council resolutions to bring about a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. We would like to warn that the volatile situation in Lebanon can lead to a wider explosion in the whole area and can have an impact on all countries in the region.

We stress the importance of increasing the membership of the Council and of ensuring regional representation. We fully believe too that equal importance should be given to improving the Council's working methods, and we underline the importance of transparency in its work. We would hope that all parties concerned will take this into account, otherwise, any reform will be meaningless. This is a unique opportunity to effect positive reform — one that should not be missed due to narrow and inflexible interests.

The lowest-common-denominator approach adopted by some States will not achieve the goal to which we all aspire. Naturally, no solution can satisfy all Member States. A readiness to reach consensus on an integrated set of proposals is thus a necessity.

It is clear that promoting representation of developing countries as both permanent and non-permanent members should be a key objective of the reform, so that the Council can have a logical democratic balance. There should be equality among countries in terms of both sovereignty and geographical representation. The Council should comprise a mixture of representatives from all continents and all major cultures and civilizations.

We have spent nearly 13 years in continuous discussion about changing the composition of the Security Council. While, in fact, we all agree on the imperative of reforming that most important United Nations organ and of making it more representative in terms of contemporary political and geographical realities, we have not been able to reach consensus on how this should be done. We must recognize that the Organization is facing huge difficulties on this issue.

It is to be expected that it will be extremely hard to resolve this problem, but we must not give up in our efforts to reach wider agreement. We should not take inflexible positions, because the present global situation is not in our collective interest. The State of Qatar, for its part, is ready to show reasonable flexibility in the negotiations, based on good intentions, not narrow interests. We should approach this challenge in a clear, transparent and consultative manner enhancing and consolidating multilateralism so that all States, large and small, can demonstrate their determination. We must avoid a situation in which a few countries will set the agenda for all the others.

A reformed United Nations can take up its leading role as the Organization responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security and for overcoming the many challenges that humanity faces. The Security Council should be democratic, effective and accountable to all, with a commitment to multilateralism, so that it can face effectively all the increasingly complex international threats and challenges. The Council should respond to the common long-term interests of all Member States, with a view to consolidating all 192 Member States into a large family which can draw strength from unity.

The Council should take account of the interests of States and be equitable in all the resolutions it adopts under the United Nations Charter. Our only hope is, through our collective wisdom, to reform the Council in such a way that allows it better to fulfil its mandate in the future, thus promoting the international interests of all States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are meeting once again to debate the question of Security Council reform. My delegation will be very brief and simply restate Guatemala's well-known position. We are convinced that no reform of the Security Council should be limited exclusively to the issue of membership, but should also include a review of its working methods and decision-making process. The transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council, as well as the participation of non-member countries in debates on issues of interest to them, are essential to the Council's legitimacy.

Guatemala is in favour of promoting the open and accessible functioning of the Security Council in order to ensure its greater transparency so as to ensure that, in the words of the Charter, it can act on behalf of the Member States and thus in the interests of the international community, with the valuable contributions of interested States.

We are therefore grateful for the initiatives undertaken by the representatives of Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Singapore with regard to the draft resolution on improving the Security Council's working methods. Guatemala welcomes that proposal with great interest and believes that such contributions enrich the dialogue between Member States and promote the eventual implementation of the outcome document of the 2005 Summit, which would in turn strengthen the organs of this Organization. We are pleased that the Security Council, as laid out in the note adopted yesterday, has adopted certain positions held by the group of five small nations, which is a step in the right direction.

We strongly support the idea of strengthening coordination of the work of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in order to guarantee continuity in the Organization's work to ensure the timely and effective maintenance and consolidation of peace, while preserving the responsibilities and competences of each United Nations organ, pursuant to the Charter.

We hope to see a more representative, transparent and balanced Security Council, and therefore believe that no reform would be complete without an increase in the number of its members. In that respect, we understand that the increase must be applied in both categories — permanent and non-permanent membership — thus ensuring the appropriate and necessary geographical distribution, including among developed and developing countries. We are favourably disposed to the aspirations of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan to be new permanent members of the Security Council. We also feel that the representation of Africa in that category is equally essential.

Finally, Guatemala reiterates its commitment to participating actively in future discussions on the question of Security Council reform. That goes hand in hand with our aspiration to be elected by the General Assembly for the first time as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and thus continue to contribute to the process of reforming its working methods.

Mr. Aspelund (Iceland): I would like to thank President Eliasson for convening this meeting on the very important issue of the reform of the Security Council. The high number of speakers proves that the issue of Security Council reform is still very much alive.

Iceland has repeatedly stated that an effective reform of the United Nations entails a comprehensive reform of the Security Council both in the expansion of its membership and in its working methods.

We have consistently supported calls for increased transparency in the work of the Security Council. Some substantive steps, such as more open briefings, meetings and debates, have been taken in

that regard, which we welcome. However, further measures are needed to improve the working methods of the Security Council. With that in mind, we welcome the draft resolution on improving the working methods of the Security Council submitted by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, the so-called group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5).

We do, however, remain convinced that, for reform of the Security Council to be meaningful, an increase in the number of both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council is necessary. The Council needs to be more representative and thus more legitimate, better mirroring today's geopolitical realities. We must remember that membership of the United Nations has increased nearly fourfold since 1945. However, the size and composition of the Security Council, particularly of its permanent membership, have remained more or less unchanged. We also have to ensure that smaller countries have a reasonable opportunity to take part.

Iceland was one of the sponsors of the so-called Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution introduced during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Iceland also fully supports the same draft resolution resubmitted by Brazil, Germany and India in the beginning of this year. At the same time, we think that the S-5 proposal and the working methods part of the G-4 proposal are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, we must continue to be engaged in serious negotiations on this matter. We believe it essential to use the current momentum and to take action soon.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): May I first thank our co-chairs for a thorough process of outreach and consultations over the past months. Their task of furthering the debate on Security Council reform was one of the most difficult to be assigned. Today's meeting is a welcome opportunity to gauge and exchange views on proposals for Security Council reform. We should focus our efforts on those areas where concrete progress can be achieved to the benefit of the United Nations membership and system.

With that objective in mind, we shall comment only briefly on New Zealand's position on the expansion of Security Council membership and at more length on suggestions that have been circulated for changes to its working methods.

On the size and composition of the Security Council, New Zealand continues to be guided by the same principles that we have set out in our previous statements. We agree that Security Council reform is an element of the overall reform agenda, but as in other areas of reform, we cannot advance until there is sufficiently broad agreement to give validity to change.

For our part, New Zealand would prefer to see a Security Council which is more broadly representative, effective and transparent in the way it operates. We have not taken a position on how that might happen and we remain open minded to options that could emerge, but we do believe that any expansion of the Security Council must include Japan.

There does not yet appear to be any emerging consensus on changing the composition of the Security Council, but while that exploration continues, New Zealand sees scope for changes to working methods that would allow the Council to be more efficient and, at the same time, strengthen the relationship between Council members and non-members.

For that reason, we welcomed the proposals put forward by Switzerland, Singapore, Liechtenstein, Costa Rica and Jordan. We agree with their rationale that closer cooperation between the Security Council and the membership at large will help the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We do not need to be reminded, with so many serious issues currently occupying the Security Council, that the influence and credibility of the United Nations are enhanced when the wider membership has confidence in the decisions of the Council and a heightened sense of collective ownership of those decisions and of commitment to the obligations they carry.

We are pleased to have received as an official document the note from the President of the Security Council on efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. We appreciate the hard work that has been done by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under Japan's chairmanship.

The recommendations in the President's note are all useful, but there is need for more progress and more ambition. For example, there are five proposals put forward by the group of five small nations — the

"Small Five" (S-5) — that we would like to see taken up by the Security Council. I will list those briefly.

First, there should be regular and timely consultations between members and non-members of the Security Council, established as part of the Council's standard operating procedures.

Secondly, where decisions by the Security Council require implementation by all Member States, the Council should seek the views of the Member States and ensure that their ability to implement decisions is taken into account in the decision-making process.

Thirdly, the Security Council should explore ways to assess the extent to which its decisions have been implemented, including the establishment of lessons-learned groups tasked with analysing obstacles to implementation and reasons for non-implementation and suggesting mechanisms or measures on the basis of best practices.

A fourth S-5 proposal that we support is that the Security Council's subsidiary bodies should include in their work, on a case-by-case basis, non-members with strong interest and relevant expertise, and that Member States should be offered informal opportunities to provide substantive input to the work of the subsidiary bodies.

Finally, the Security Council should enhance consultations with troop-contributing countries and other States that are especially engaged in United Nations field operations, particularly when they involve risks for the deployed personnel.

Any progress on updating the Security Council's working methods to make them more accessible to the wider membership is to be welcomed. New Zealand sees the President's note as setting in place some important stepping stones. We hope that the debate today will give us a sense of urgency to take that work forward.

Mr. Nemuun (Mongolia): Few issues have proved to be as politically sensitive and hard to solve as the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We all recall how a good part of the fifty-ninth session was dedicated to discussions, negotiations and deliberations on various formulas for Security Council reform, with numerous proposals, counter-proposals, arguments and counter-arguments having been presented and championed by different groups. At some point, it even led to expressions of concern on the part of many Member States that this sole issue was going to overshadow the overall negotiations in the run-up to the 2005 world summit. In retrospect, we now know that it did not.

In his recent letter dated 28 June 2006, President Jan Eliasson rightly pointed out the highlights of our efforts to implement the outcome document of the 2005 world summit, but one essential element was missing from the list of reforms that we were able to attain: Security Council reform. In fact, that issue has laid dormant for quite some time now, and we thank you, Sir, for holding this most timely debate. It surely will reinvigorate the interest of Member States and, given the sufficient time we had to reflect on this issue, it may well bring us closer to reaching a broad understanding on the way forward. The sheer number of speakers in today's debate is a testimony to its timeliness and significance.

Mongolia's position on the reform of the Security Council is well known. We believe that a reformed Security Council will be better equipped to counter the challenges of the new millennium, as its decisions would wield greater legitimacy due to its more effective, democratic, representative and accountable nature. Mongolia is of the view that the composition of the Security Council has ceased to reflect current world realities and changes in the membership of the Organization since the end of the Second World War, the collapse of the colonial system and the bipolar world order. Indeed, that sentiment is shared by the general membership of this Organization, as can be seen from the outcome document, which supports the early reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

Apart from that laudable unity, Member States have different points of view on how to solve the current situation. At what pace should we move and, more fundamentally, what is the right way to reform the Security Council? I will deliberately not mention particular models of expansion that proliferated during the course of the deliberations last year.

The point of departure for Mongolia remains a just and equitable expansion of the Security Council in both its permanent and non-permanent categories of

membership, ensuring due representation of developing and developed countries alike.

As for the criteria for the selection of additional permanent members, we must, in our view, include equitable geographical distribution, the genuine commitment of the aspirant countries to the goals and objectives of the United Nations, and the capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that respect, Mongolia continues to support Japan, Germany and India in what we see as their legitimate aspirations. Mongolia believes that Africa and Latin America have also to be duly represented on the Council.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is an essential element of reform. The core of our efforts in that area should be to ensure that the Security Council is more mindful of the views of the general membership of the United Nations in the decisions it takes and that a more harmonious and mutually complementary and cooperative relationships exists between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The reform of the Security Council, and its enhanced legitimacy and effectiveness, should progress in parallel with, not to the detriment of, the increased authority and role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations. In the same vein, Mongolia supports a so-called review clause to be included in any expansion scenario.

My delegation takes note of the steps taken by the Security Council on improving its working methods, particularly through the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the chairmanship of Japan, the results of which we are about to see. We also note with interest the proposal of the group of five small nations, contained in draft resolution A/60/L.49. Increased transparency in the Council's work, the increased involvement in its work of States not members, and its enhanced accountability to the membership are elements that will benefit all — first and foremost, the Council itself.

Many a lance was broken last year over the issue of the reform of the Security Council. It is now time to move on, past all differences and towards fresh ideas. Today's debate should not be a one-off exercise, but should rather be followed by wide-ranging consultations with a view to arriving at a solution that enjoys the widest possible understanding among Member States. My delegation stands ready to play an active part in such consultations.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): The outcome document of the 2005 world summit highlights the central role of Security Council reform. It also underlines the fact that this reform contains two elements — the enlargement of the membership of the Security Council and the improvement of its working methods — that are of equal importance. I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to discuss the reform.

Finland, in its national capacity, strongly supports the reform and enlargement of the Security Council. We must take every opportunity to make the United Nations more efficient, transparent and more reflective of the aspirations of its entire membership. The reform of the Security Council is an important part in that process. We must make sure that that the Council is truly effective in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

For most countries, membership in the Security Council is a rare and limited opportunity. However, all United Nations Member States are required to implement the Security Council's decisions and are directly affected by the actions of the Council. Therefore, closer cooperation between the Security Council and the membership at large is essential.

Finland supports the enlargement of the Council in the number of permanent and non-permanent members alike so that the Council can represent the political realities of the twenty-first century. However, if the Security Council is to be both effective and legitimate, the right of veto should not be extended to the new permanent members under any circumstances.

Finland also strongly supports reform of the Council's working methods so as to make it more transparent, inclusive and legitimate. In that respect, we warmly welcome the note by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions that was adopted by the Security Council yesterday. That document lists the recent practices and newly agreed measures of the Security Council and is a good practical step in enhancing the transparency and openness of the Security Council's working methods.

Mr. Hill (Australia): We are grateful for this opportunity to discuss another element of the critically important United Nations reform project. Members will

be familiar with Australia's work for United Nations reform. Both nationally and as a member of the Canada-Australia-New Zealand group, we have actively engaged to find ways to make the United Nations more effective, efficient and accountable, and that is the prism through which we view Security Council reform.

We were disappointed that the United Nations summit process in 2005 did not arrive at an acceptable outcome on Security Council reform. That was, in our view, a missed opportunity. However, it was not the end of the road and, along with many other States, Australia remains engaged with the process of Security Council reform.

Australia has been a supporter of appropriate reform of the Security Council for a long time. The world has changed a great deal in the past 61 years, and we need to ensure that the United Nations security structures accurately reflect the impact of those changes.

A more representative Council needs to be balanced against the ongoing need for the Council to effectively discharge its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The ability of the Security Council to act resolutely, decisively and quickly are paramount. Its responsibility for collective security places upon it the highest expectations of the international community, and it should not be enlarged so far as to make it unwieldy or unable to make consensus decisions. The creation of a small number of new permanent and non-permanent positions on the Security Council seems to us to be an appropriate way to achieve that balance.

Australia considers the claims of Japan and India to be clear. Both make major contributions to the United Nations system, either in financial contributions, peacekeeping commitments or through a history of consistent and active engagement with the Organization. Australia also continues to support Brazil and appropriate African representation. Australia has consistently opposed the extension of veto rights to any new members.

Reform of the Security Council's membership goes hand in hand with reform of the Council's working methods. The workload of the Council appears to increase in intensity and volume each year and it makes sense to review its mechanisms. To that end, we are grateful for the proposals from the group of five small nations on working methods reform. We also note the work of Ambassador Oshima and his colleagues in the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. A number of the ideas produced in those forums may ultimately improve the effectiveness of the Council.

We should sound a note of caution that, in working towards appropriate processes for the Security Council, again we must not jeopardize the Council's capacity to act in accordance with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as outlined in Article 24 of the United Nations Charter. That criterion should be applied to any proposed reforms to the Council's working methods.

We thank you, Sir, for convening this useful discussion and look forward to further discussions on United Nations reform issues in coming months.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank you, Sir, for having organized this meeting, which comes at an especially timely moment. I know that that is a hallowed cliché at the United Nations, but it is relevant on this occasion.

Why is this the right time? There are three reasons for that. First, we began serious discussion of Security Council reform two years ago. In September, it will be a year since our heads of State and Government met in summit and committed themselves to proceeding with reform. Secondly, United Nations reform is now well under way, yet everyone knows that there can be no true reform of our Organization without Security Council reform. Thirdly, our thinking has matured and time has passed. I have noted a greater resolve, reflected in various statements, to reach an outcome, and positions are less heated than they once were. That is why we feel that the time has come to take great strides towards reaching a solution.

What solutions are available? Many options have been considered in recent months and we have participated actively in all discussions, which have only strengthened our opinions on three parameters.

The first is that the enlargement should involve the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. That is a precondition for achieving broad consensus. The second parameter is that we are more convinced than ever before in our support for Germany,

Brazil, India and Japan becoming permanent members of the Security Council. The third parameter is to ensure that the African continent plays its full role in a reformed Security Council.

Reform of Security Council membership is not aimed at satisfying any one party. It is in the interest of us all because it will enhance the Council's authority. In the same vein, it is important that progress also be made with regard to reform of the Council's working methods. My country welcomes the set of proposals submitted on behalf of the Security Council by the Ambassador of Japan. The measures adopted represent an important step forward in terms of inclusiveness and transparency. Here again, this is not a question of satisfying one party or another. Rather, it is quite simply an issue of improving the Security Council's effectiveness.

With regard to those two tracks, France will continue to strive most energetically for results.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): The issue of Security Council reform has been on the agenda of the United Nations for a dozen years or so. Unfortunately, and despite all our efforts, a solution has not yet been found.

We hope, however, that this debate will be a significant step towards such a solution and we think that the conditions for finding a solution seem to be better now than they were before, for several reasons.

First, efforts to reform the United Nations have intensified over the past year. They have yielded some important results, even though our expectations had been higher and more ambitious. In the light of those achievements, our inability to progress on such a crucial issue as Security Council reform looks like a serious failure. What is more, in the public perception, Security Council reform is viewed as a test of the ability of the United Nations to adapt to new realities.

Secondly, the discussion on Security Council reform has become deeper and more mature. Several drafts of the solution have been presented. Their advantages and disadvantages have been extensively considered. The discussion has also become more comprehensive. It has covered not only the expansion of the membership of the Security Council, but also possible changes in its working methods. Those changes are intended not only to improve the work of the Security Council, but also to expand the involvement in its work of non-members of the Council and regional organizations. They also aim at increasing the transparency of the work of the Council and enhancing its effectiveness.

The two processes — one of Security Council expansion, and the other of improving and developing the methods of work of the Security Council — even if dealt with on separate tracks, are mutually complementary. They can help us to find a solution to each and to move forward the reform of the Security Council as a whole.

In that context, we welcome the results of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We also note with appreciation the work and the draft of the so-called group of five small nations. Their ideas and proposals undoubtedly inspired the discussions of the Working Group and remain an important guideline for further endeavours in that domain.

Thirdly and finally, in April we held a good and useful session of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The session was preceded by a series of bilateral consultations conducted by Ambassador Bethel and Ambassador Majoor. The report on those consultations, discussion during the session, as well as the summary of the discussion provided all of us with comprehensive and valuable insight into what the Member States feel and what possible solutions could look like.

Thus, let me repeat: We resume our debate in new and, I believe, more favourable circumstances. But can we find a solution? In that spirit, I would like to offer a few comments on how my delegation sees the purpose of the present debate and possible solutions.

First, we see this debate as the resumption of the dialogue on this difficult but unavoidable and important part of United Nations reform. We hope that this dialogue is resumed in good will and with the determination to find an acceptable solution.

Secondly, we believe that the overhaul of the Security Council should cover both its composition and working methods and that the review of the membership should include both its permanent and non-permanent membership categories.

Thirdly, in approaching the category of permanent membership, we should first of all follow the philosophy of the United Nations Charter in that respect concerning the reflection in the Security Council of existing realities of power. The presence in the Council and the cooperation of the world's main actors is not only desirable but necessary if the Council is to discharge its responsibilities effectively. In that context, we have declared our support for the aspirations of those countries that make and are able to make a particularly important contribution to the United Nations system, and we maintain that support. At the same time, we believe that a larger number of permanent members of the Council should reflect the broader membership of the United Nations and representation for all regions. That is a question of both the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council's actions.

Fourthly, the broader membership of the entire United Nations and equitable geographic distribution should be the basic guidelines in the enlargement of the category of non-permanent members of the Security Council. In this context, let me just echo what the Chairman of the Eastern European Group, the representative of Armenia, said this morning: the enlargement of the non-permanent category must include an additional seat for the Eastern European region, which has doubled its membership during the last few years.

Fifthly, we take note of the discussion on the veto power of new permanent members, having frequently expressed critical views on this issue. Our understanding is that the idea of non-extension of the veto power to new permanent members seems to be widely accepted and should be incorporated into a future solution.

Sixthly, and similarly, a proposal to review in 15 years any solution which can be worked out now has already found broad approval. The commitment to such a review ensures that we will not create a kind of eternal structure and that, to the contrary, we will envisage the possible changes of circumstances and the possible adaptations of today's decision to future and unpredictable developments. Non-extension of the veto power to new permanent members is a guarantee that we will not create new obstacles in the way of such adaptations.

Finally, reflecting on possible changes in the composition of the Security Council, we should take into account changes already agreed and possible further changes in the working methods of that body. Such changes should lead to closer cooperation by the members of the Security Council with non-members and regional organizations, to greater transparency in the Council's activities and, in the end, to greater accountability for Security Council members and greater inclusiveness for non-members in the work of that body.

Allow me to conclude with the following observations. We strongly believe that, while we are dealing with these old problems, we are at a new and more promising stage of the debate. Progress is the reform of the United Nations as a whole requires making additional and urgent efforts aimed at the reform of the Security Council. We have not yet overcome all of our difficulties, but I would say that a kind of middle ground in our thinking about the problem is gradually expanding. We have broad agreement, if not consensus, that the current composition of the Security Council does not reflect present realities and should be more representative. We also agree that we should increase the involvement in that most important decision-making body of those who contribute most to the United Nations.

New ideas have emerged, such as the non-extension of the veto power to new permanent members and the commitment to reviewing in the future solutions which are worked out today. Some new ideas have also emerged in today's debate.

Changes in the working methods of the Security Council also facilitate our overcoming some of the issues that we are facing in the debate. All of that, I believe, allows us to take another step forward.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): Despite perceptions to the contrary, we witnessed a number of significant United Nations reforms this year. The Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Central Emergency Response Fund were established. A whistle-blower protection system and an ethics office have been initiated. Resolutions on development and management and Secretariat reform have been adopted.

There has, however, been one exception. We have seen little real movement in Security Council reform, either on the question of enlargement or on that of

working methods. I will deal with those questions sequentially.

Singapore supports enlargement of the Security Council to better reflect current geopolitical realities. Today's world is different from that of 1945, yet the Security Council remains essentially unchanged. If consensus is reached on enlarging the Security Council, we would support expansion in both permanent and non-permanent seats as part of a comprehensive Security Council reform, including working methods.

In that regard, my delegation would like to reiterate our support for the previous Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution (A/59/L.64) on the Council's extension, except on the question of the veto. We know that three of the G4 countries and the African Union have resubmitted their proposals on the issue, and we hope to see some progress in the near future.

While on the subject of Security Council enlargement, allow me to reiterate my delegation's views on the use of the veto and the idea of establishing semi-permanent seats. The right of the veto was born of a different era. It was a privilege and a safety valve conferred on the five victorious Powers from the Second World War to secure their participation in the United Nations. The situation today is different. Singapore opposes granting the veto to any new permanent members. Extending the veto will complicate decision-making in the Council and will undermine the credibility of the United Nations. Paralysis comes to mind, and I suspect that that would encourage the major Powers to bypass the Security Council to the detriment of us all.

That said, we recognize that the five permanent members will not give up the right to the veto. That is the reality that we have to accept. But we should not add to the problem by further complicating Security Council decision-making.

We also have strong reservations regarding any notion of semi-permanent seats. We would allow medium Powers to seek election both to the renewable seats, whatever their length of term, and to the existing two-year non-renewable seats. In practice, that would result in the exclusion of small States from the Security Council. That is unfair. Even if we were able to make it possible for all Member States to compete for both categories of non-permanent seats, the net result would be similar. I repeat that that is unfair to half of the approximately 100 small States that have never served in the Security Council. We cannot support proposals that exclude small countries or make it difficult for them to serve in key organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. Such exclusiveness would do nothing to improve the legitimacy or representativeness of the Security Council.

Enlargement is not the only issue. An equally important issue is the reform of the Security Council's working methods. If our aim is to make the Security Council more effective, we need comprehensive reform that includes working methods. I might add that enlargement and working methods should be pursued on parallel tracks and not be held hostage by each other.

Working-methods reform is about ensuring that the Security Council is transparent and inclusive in its decision-making. It is about ensuring that the Council's decisions have buy-in from stakeholders, thus making its positions more legitimate and effective. Regrettably, the Security Council remains opaque, leading many to question its decisions.

We happen to know that the Council is trying to address the issue of its working methods through its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions chaired by Japan. We would like to see this initiative continue but, while the current effort is commendable, it does not do enough to cover aspects dealing with interactions between the Security Council and non-members of the Council.

It is in that context that Singapore, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Switzerland and Costa Rica — the group of five small nations (S-5) — have put forward a draft resolution (A/60/L.49) on improving the working methods of the Security Council. While we are all familiar with the details, let me elaborate on the rationale.

The S-5 proposals do not seek to undermine the powers and prerogatives of the Security Council. The S-5 draft resolution does not advocate abandoning the current system. Rather, the draft resolution has taken on board suggestions that we have been discussing for years in various forums, including the Open-ending Working Group on Security Council reform. It has packaged many of these suggestions as improvements to the Council's working methods to increase the Council's effectiveness and legitimacy.

The S-5 proposals are also in line with Article 10 of the Charter, which states that the General Assembly has the authority to discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to functions of any organs of the United Nations and to make recommendations to the United Nations Members or to the Security Council. We believe that if the Council can be made more transparent and communicative, this could increase the buy-in and support for Council decisions on the part of all Member States.

I hope that delegations will respond positively to the S-5 suggestions for improving the working methods of the Security Council. We believe that our suggestions will increase and accountability of the Security Council and contribute to a strengthened and more effective United Nations.

Mr. De Palacio España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our appreciation for this opportunity to once again debate the issue of the reform and working methods of the Security Council, giving it the time it deserves. This is a subject about which there are still major differences between Member States. We must therefore discuss it as calmly as possible and while endeavouring to establish a new perspective that allows for more substantive progress than has been made thus far.

My delegation has clearly expressed its preference for a reform of the Council based on the broadest possible agreement among all Member States. We believe that we should open up the full range of possibilities to provide representation for all, without increasing or consolidating inequalities. Spain, along with a significant number of other States, has therefore promoted the creation of 10 new elected, non-permanent seats. That would make the Security Council more democratic and provide for periodic accountability to all the Member States represented in the General Assembly. As we have often said, it would also serve to strengthen the legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council's actions on behalf of the entire international community.

All regional groups should benefit from the creation of new elected non-permanent seats. The distribution of seats should allow for better rotation in the Council's membership, especially for medium-sized and small States. We also believe that regional groups should be able to decide on mechanisms governing rotation and the possible re-election of their members, so as to allow for greater democracy and transparency and to ensure that the interests of each subregion are taken into account. That regional component should be very useful in strengthening the principle of representativity. Elections should nevertheless continue to take place in the General Assembly, as set out in the Charter.

An increase in the number of Security Council members would not be complete if it did not go hand in hand with the reform of the Council's working methods. My delegation in particular calls for greater participation by non-member States in Council debates. In that regard, I would like to say that we have a positive view of draft resolution A/60/L.49, regarding the Council's working methods, which was introduced under agenda item 120 by the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. In order that it may be effectively implemented in the future, we hope that the draft resolution will be the object of general consensus, including the members of the Security Council. In that connection, I would also like to point to the work done by the delegation of Japan and the other members of the Security Council in addressing the issue of reforming the Council's working methods. We believe that to be a positive step.

A hasty decision on Security Council reform that does not include the necessary broad agreement may never go into force. That would run counter to the legitimate aspirations of the vast majority of States, which favour an expansion that provides the requisite opportunities for all through democratic elections in the General Assembly, which is the plenary and supreme organ of the Organization.

Already months have passed since the General Assembly took stock of the status of Security Council reform initiatives in the relevant Working Group. In that period, it has proven impossible to reach any agreement that would make it possible to adopt a model for Security Council reform that would be generally acceptable to the General Assembly. We were pleased that some of the current reform proposals were ultimately not put to the vote in the General Assembly, for nothing would have been more inappropriate, given that none of the proposals has sufficient support at the moment.

The movement in which Spain is active, Uniting for Consensus, believes that it is only by carrying out negotiations on the various proposals that have been made that it will be possible to reach a potential agreement. Maximalist positions calling for a reform of the Security Council in which differences between the various members would be accentuated in terms of the permanence of their membership have been proved not to have the necessary support from the vast majority of delegations. The time has come to abandon positions that seek privilege and to begin a negotiating process that is serious, rigorous, open and participatory, so as to reach a compromise solution based on the various proposals.

Only such a process of negotiations will allow us to make progress in the very necessary reform of the Security Council. The sooner we accept that any exclusionary option has no future, the sooner we will be able to focus our energy on drafting a representative, equitable and democratic formula for the very badly needed expansion in the number of members in the Security Council.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly is once again addressing the important issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Today's two meetings are all the more crucial given the significant progress made following the summit in September 2005 — notably, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. Member States must now ensure, in a spirit of unity and openness, that significant progress is made by the launching the much-awaited reform of the Security Council.

In that regard, His Excellency Mr. Youcef Yousfi, Permanent Representative of Algeria and Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of July, has very clearly and eloquently set forth the common African position. The delegation of Senegal fully endorses his statement.

The rationale favouring the taking into account of the African position is based on the sad fact of the injustice that Africa has suffered. This is a continent that, despite its massive and active participation in the life of the United Nations and the fact that it includes 53 Member States, has been unjustly deprived of permanent representation in the Security Council. That situation, which has already been denounced in the Assembly by His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, is all the more intolerable and paradoxical given that, according to generally accepted statistics, almost 70 per cent of the issues dealt with by the Security Council concern African problems.

As is clearly evident in the Ezulwini Consensus, whose main elements were reaffirmed by the Sirte African Declaration and by the most recent African Union summit, held on 1 and 2 July 2006 at Banjul, the Gambia, this is a historical anomaly that must be corrected as soon as possible, within the framework of a fair and equitable expansion of membership that would give Africa two permanent seats, with the same privileges and prerogatives as the current permanent members, and five non-permanent seats. The African States themselves must be entrusted with allocating those seats and defining the criteria therefor.

My country, Senegal, believes that, above and beyond the restructuring of the Security Council, the working methods of that important organ should be improved considerably, particularly with a view to ensuring greater transparency in its work and also greater responsibility on the part of its members vis-à-vis the entire membership of the United Nations and the international community. At stake here are the credibility and effectiveness of both the Security Council and our universal Organization.

Security Council reform can be achieved if we have the political will, embrace innovation and act with determination. I can assure the General Assembly that the Senegalese delegation will provide all necessary support to ensure that we have a renewed Security Council that is more democratic, more transparent and better prepared to meet the urgent challenges of today's world.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, let me thank President Eliasson for having organized this debate. Today we have yet another opportunity to revive the momentum for reforming the Security Council, in accordance with the decision of our world leaders and the wishes of millions of people around the globe. Only a modernized, dynamic and fully democratic United Nations can best guarantee a safe and secure world for all of humanity.

The outcome document of the September 2005 world summit clearly recognized that reform of the Security Council was central to the overall effort to reform the United Nations in order to make it more

broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions.

A truly reformed Security Council must reflect the democratic values of our times. Its membership must be expanded and its working methods updated, so that this very important organ can achieve higher standards of representation, transparency and accountability.

Member States have successfully implemented the decision that required the setting up of a Human Rights Council and a Peacebuilding Commission. The two bodies are now fully operational. Determined efforts are being made to reform the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The spotlight is now on the Security Council. It is our belief that, given the same commitment and political will, significant progress could be achieved in reforming the Security Council, in line with the letter and spirit of the outcome document.

Ghana subscribes to the African Common Position articulated earlier by the Chairman of the African Group for July, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria. We believe that Africa must be fully represented in all the decision-making organs of the United Nations, not least the Security Council. Obviously, we have a vested interest in that organ, which, under the United Nations Charter, has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation therefore reiterates the call for Africa to be allotted at least two permanent seats on the Security Council, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, as long as the veto continues to exist. This would be in addition to the five non-permanent seats that we seek on an expanded Security Council. Africa could thereby enhance its contribution to the new world order of lasting peace and security to which we all aspire.

We are happy to note that considerable progress has also been achieved in the search for ways of improving the working methods of the Security Council. My delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan, and his team for the excellent work that they have done. The Group's report contains a wealth of very practical and useful proposals. Ultimately, increased transparency, broader representation and participation, as well as easier access, will enhance the Council's authority and legitimacy in the eyes of the wider public. The democracy that we have all been preaching, or which has been preached to us, in domestic affairs should also be practiced on the international plane.

In an era of democratic governance, it is becoming increasingly difficult to defend a system whereby a minority of five of the 192 Member States that make up the United Nations have special powers and privileges and are permanently at the core of our global security system. The system is dysfunctional in that any one of the five, if it so chooses, can paralyse action by the most important organ of our collective security system.

We share the view so well articulated by Paul Kennedy in his latest book, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present and Future of the United Nations*, that the 1945 peace settlement — and by inference the United Nations — was the first post-war order that, in an unprecedented manner, gave veto privileges to a pentarchy of nations indefinitely. But, as he aptly notes,

> "the ever-changing nature of the international political system — in a word, the rise and fall of Great Powers — cannot be frozen or halted by a mere contract."

The world is moving on, and we should change with the times. The desire for change has permeated the entire Organization, and the momentum exists as well for altering the status quo. Let us muster the political will and the courage to carry the reforms to their logical conclusion. Towards that end, my delegation would like to reiterate its unswerving commitment to the pursuit of a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, in order to free it, energize it and make it more responsive to the challenges of contemporary times and the years ahead.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): We welcome today's debate. The United Kingdom remains a strong advocate of Security Council reform, including expansion. The Council remains, and needs to remain, an efficient and effective body able to tackle the many modern challenges of international peace and security.

We welcome what has been achieved in the United Nations this year in other areas, including the Peacebuilding Commission, management reform, the development resolution and mandate review. I should like to pay tribute to all those who led those efforts. But, as the representative of Ghana said, the spotlight now is on the Council. The United Kingdom is disappointed that the debate on Council expansion has remained stalled for too long. We want to see a Council that is fully representative of the modern world and of today's United Nations.

That is why the United Kingdom remains strongly supportive of permanent seats for Japan, Germany, Brazil and India on an enlarged Security Council. We support permanent representation for Africa, and we want to see more non-permanent seats, so that the entire membership of the United Nations has more frequent opportunities to serve on the Council and to contribute positively to the Council's work. In that regard, we endorse what previous speakers have said about the importance of small States being on the Council.

The challenges of peace and security do not go away. We saw that today in the Secretary-General's briefing to the Security Council on Lebanon. The Council has also dealt recently with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and will soon be considering Iran. The Peacebuilding Commission, which is a new body, has brought together certain aspects of the work of the Security Council and the General Assembly by dealing with development and post-conflict issues. As other speakers have said, it deserves our full support.

We hope that the United Nations can rise to the challenge of finding a way through the current impasse with respect to the Security Council. Fresh thinking is required. That is why British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his speech at Georgetown University in May, called for renewed momentum in the debate on Council reform. We hope very much that today's discussions will contribute to that.

Expansion is important, but reform is not just about expansion. We have long supported attempts to review how the Security Council operates, in order to strengthen its effectiveness, enhance its efficiency, improve its transparency and expand its interaction with others. We all agreed in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) that it was for the Council to do that.

The United Kingdom is therefore delighted that the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, skilfully chaired by the Permanent Representative of Japan, produced a wide range of tangible proposals to improve the working methods of the Security Council. The United Kingdom has been an energetic participant in this process. We believe that the outcomes, which — as the Japanese delegation has indicated — were endorsed yesterday by the Council, will help the Council to work even better and will ensure that communication between the Council and the wider membership represented in the Assembly remains active and beneficial and continues to develop. The United Kingdom looks forward to working closely with Council partners to ensure that these outcomes are implemented in practice.

We note the comments from the group of five small nations — Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, Singapore and Liechtenstein — and others on the need for Security Council reform. We share a common objective. The United Kingdom also believes that it is right that all members of the United Nations express their views and input positively into the reform debate. Security Council reform has a bearing on all United Nations Member States. A more effective Council is in all our interests.

Mr. Piperkov (Bulgaria): Bulgaria associates itself with the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of Romania, Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States. We would now like to outline our views on some specific aspects of the issue at hand.

Bulgaria believes that reform of the Security Council is part of the overall efforts made by the international community to promote positive change and transformation of the United Nations in conformity with the new economic and political realities. We are firmly committed to the reform process and agree with the notion that any reform will remain inconclusive unless it addresses the issue of improving the body that stands at the core of the United Nations mission to maintain international peace and security.

Bulgaria is of the view that reform should be dealt with in a way that will help reinforce the representative character, effectiveness, legitimacy and transparency of the Council's activities. On the issue of

enlargement, we strongly support an eventual decision that will further increase the effectiveness of the Security Council and will strengthen its capacity to maintain international peace and security. In that regard, we welcome the common understanding that seemed to have emerged during our previous debates on expansion as an essential part of the overall strategy to achieve a reformed and credible Security Council, even though opposing approaches remain.

The debate on Security Council reform consumed much energy and time during 2005, with no apparent substantive result. Regrettably, so far we have not been able to fully meet the challenge and to arrive at a solution on the issue of expansion. We share the disappointment prevailing among Member States in that regard, although we do not believe that our efforts have been in vain. In fact, we have had a productive and useful exchange of views both in the General Assembly and in its Open-ended Working Group, as well as in the regional groups and among like-minded countries. Let me assure the Assembly of Bulgaria's willingness to cooperate further in considering any initiative that might be helpful in stimulating consensual ideas on the reform process as a whole and on Security Council reform in particular.

My delegation is confident that, in the context of the new realities, some countries will be able to successfully perform the duties and responsibilities stemming from permanent membership owing to their increased economic and political potential and their widely acknowledged international role. We share the concern expressed recently by the Secretary-General, at the opening of the United Nations campus in Bonn, that it is no longer acceptable that major countries and major international Powers are not at the table. He further specified that, in fact, "these are the Powers we turn to when we have problems in regions". Similarly, the increase in the overall number of Member States in recent decades — including those belonging to the Eastern European Group — points strongly to the need for expansion in the non-permanent category as well.

In reference to the non-permanent category, we support enlargement that would ensure maintenance of the balance between the permanent and non-permanent members as well as the equitable distribution of seats among the regional groups. Furthermore, with due respect to various concepts and concrete ideas, we can support only a formula that takes into account the legitimate and justified aspiration of the Group of Eastern European States — whose membership has doubled over the past decade — to an additional seat in the non-permanent category.

Bulgaria has always been a staunch supporter of improving the working methods of the Security Council. We recognize the high value of the initiative of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — and the recently adopted note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) concerning improvement of the Council's working methods. The ideas set out therein could be mutually complementary and could become meaningful steps in the right direction.

We are convinced that, given the regional character of most of the issues on the Security Council's agenda, the effectiveness of the Council's activities will increase substantively if the views of the regional and concerned States, as well as those of regional organizations, are duly taken into consideration in the decision-making process involving regional issues. We believe that procedures should be further developed to allow for their participation in the Council's consultations.

In concluding, let me assure the President once again of my delegation's full cooperation and support.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): At the 2005 world summit, heads of State or Government expressed support for early reform of the Security Council as an essential part of overall United Nations reform, and they committed themselves to strive to reach a decision to that end.

The debate we had in November 2005 reconfirmed the widely shared agreement that there is a need to expand the Security Council, in order to make it broadly representative and more efficient. The debate also showed that views remain diverse as to the appropriate size of the Council and categories of its expanded membership. Indeed, many delegations, including my own, had hoped for some results to be achieved by the end of 2005. Unfortunately, no progress has been made on this issue.

For many years we have discussed the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. On the eve of the 2005 world summit, these discussions gained additional political impetus and yet they have not resulted in any significant decision. We see no other

way but to continue our discussions in a search for the widest possible agreement on this issue. Not only does this remain a compelling task for us; it is also widely accepted that no United Nations reform can be completed without Security Council reform. Therefore, we should bring this issue to the attention of our leaders at the general debate of the Sixty-first General Assembly session, not because we lack policy vision, but, rather, because we need more political will for change.

Security Council reform must be comprehensive, and it must include both enlargement and working methods. In terms of membership and composition, the Security Council does not reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. Any reform of the United Nations which fails to reflect these new realities would be incomplete, and the Security Council would run the risk of losing some of its legitimacy and authority.

Slovenia supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. We continue to believe that that is the only appropriate way for the Security Council to achieve broader representation by including countries that have the most responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and to ensure the adequate and equitable geographic representation of all regional groups, including the Eastern European Group, whose membership in the United Nations has doubled in recent years. Slovenia therefore supports an enlargement of the Security Council that includes an additional seat for the Eastern European Group in the category of non-permanent members.

Working methods of the Security Council are equally important. Regardless of the size of the enlarged Security Council, we need to adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of the wider United Nations membership in its work, and thus to ensure greater transparency in its work.

We believe that improved working methods are necessary to better enable the United Nations, including the Security Council, to collectively address today's threats and challenges in a globalized world. For that reason, Slovenia supports draft resolution A/60/L.49, on improving the working methods of the Security Council, presented by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. We see the draft resolution as an important contribution to the transparency, inclusiveness and accountability of the Council's work.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile has been an active promoter of an in-depth reform of the United Nations which, in reaffirming the principles and values of the Charter, will increase its credibility and legitimacy. We have already taken important steps in that direction, but we should not set aside the challenge of reforming the Security Council. For Chile, Security Council reform is a very important element within the overall United Nations reform process.

Our country seeks a renewal of the Security Council that will give it greater representativeness, transparency and effectiveness. We endorse the idea of enlarging the Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent members. But this should go hand in hand both with a review and improvement of the Council's working methods, as well as with a new way of understanding the rights and obligations of its members. Chile supports bringing in new permanent members without the right of veto. That goes together with the essential value that we give to the principle of equality before the law of States and the democratization of international bodies.

Since the creation of the United Nations and through the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, my country has maintained that consistent position against the veto. Although the total elimination of the veto seems a far-off or unrealistic goal, we have not given up on seriously considering interim formulas, for example, restricting the use of the veto to Chapter-VII issues and, in such instances, excluding cases of genocide or crimes against humanity.

In parallel, we value those initiatives which seek to improve the Council's working methods. We believe that improving the working methods of the Security Council can generate greater levels of transparency and effectiveness. For this reason, we have joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/60/L.49, introduced by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5).

Chile will continue to support the aspirations of friendly countries seeking permanent seats, as is the case, for our region, of Brazil. We will continue to work to build consensus on this subject and on the necessary comprehensive and successful reform of the Organization.

The President of the Assembly and the Vice-Chairs of the Working Group can count on our cooperation through this process.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I address the item before us, my delegation would like to express the deep concern of the Government of Mexico regarding the serious events that are occurring in the Middle East. In this context, we would like to state our sorrow at the numerous civilian victims and renew Mexico's wish for progress towards a just and lasting solution to the conflicts afflicting that region.

It is interesting and illustrative to see the contrast between our debates here in the General Assembly and what is happening in the state of discussion within the Security Council.

Mexico is participating in these consultations with the resolute purpose of pushing for a substantive reform of the Security Council, a reform that will enable that organ to operate with the legitimacy and effectiveness that the very complex contemporary world demands, a reform that will update the composition and working methods of the Council so that it can attend to the new and old threats that endanger international peace and security.

Security Council reform has been discussed for more than a decade. In that period of time, the debate has been enriched by virtue of the quantity and quality of proposals that have been put forward. However, the General Assembly has not been able to design a formula that will generate broad consensus and that will avoid divisions among the membership. The history of these debates shows that none of the initiatives has sufficient support to produce a viable reform that could be generally accepted.

It is time to look at this issue from a new and different point of view. Our challenge now is of great systemic and political complexity. From the systemic point of view, our deliberations cannot be guided by any purpose other than guaranteeing that this reform will produce the best possible collective security system. Therefore, the architecture which we design together will have to stand the test of improving the current structure in its task of guaranteeing global peace and security. The structure and the institutional arrangements must be subordinate to the substance that gives the Security Council its reason for being.

From the political point of view, various factors come together in the discussion, such as legitimacy, transparency, accountability, the need to update the Council's composition in the light of the expansion of the United Nations membership, the characteristics — permanent or non-permanent — of the seats and — we cannot avoid it — the changes in the balance of power at the outset of the twenty-first century. Participating in the Security Council is increasingly seen as a source of national prestige and as a means to gain recognition rather than as a very delicate responsibility in preserving a peaceful and safe world.

In this context, over the years there has been a noticeable divorce between the needs of the collective security system and the political considerations of Member States. We should ask ourselves, therefore, whether or not it is feasible to reconcile the system's needs with the individual aspirations of Members. We therefore need a more efficient Security Council than the one we have today, and one that is perceived and recognized as more representative of today's world. We need both conditions to be met.

In order to achieve this double purpose, the structure of the Security Council needs to be sufficiently flexible and able to evolve so as to adjust itself to the changing nature of the international scenario. At the same time, its composition should be sufficiently balanced and meaningful for it to enjoy the legitimacy it needs.

How can we make headway in Security Council reform? In the judgement of Mexico, we require two essential components. First of all, we need a shared assessment of the Security Council's deficiencies, weaknesses and strengths. If we do not agree on what the Security Council is doing well or doing poorly, we will never be able to put forth alternatives to improve it. We will begin the Security Council's reform trip without the right compass.

Secondly, we require a process of open, transparent and inclusive negotiations: intergovernmental negotiations in which Member States discuss the system's current flaws and propose collective strategies to tackle the threats and challenges to international peace and security.

My delegation believes that it would be useful to replicate the format of the consultations and negotiations that were carried out to create the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. It

would be highly appropriate and beneficial to take advantage of that mechanism, which has already proven to be effective.

The reform of the Security Council will move forward only if we build a shared negotiating environment in which opinions can be offered, so that each Member State can explain its motivations and concerns: an environment in which we can jointly find common ground and thus build a more modern, more effective Security Council that is able to act with greater legitimacy on behalf of the entire international community.

With that in mind, my delegation requests the President of the General Assembly to work on a proposal to undertake negotiations that could guide us in crystallizing this necessary reform. Mexico will participate in a committed and constructive fashion in this important exercise.

The meeting rose at 6:15 p.m.

United Nations A/60/PV.96

General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

96th plenary meeting
Friday, 21 July 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Diarra (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda items 117 and 120 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I would like to remind members that there are still 33 speakers inscribed on my list. I therefore appeal to members to make their statements as concise as possible, in order that we may be able to exhaust the list of speakers this afternoon.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): I wish to thank the President for the opportunity to speak to the important issue of Security Council reform and expansion.

The United States supports expansion of the Security Council, but change must be far more than simply change for its own sake. Changes should be designed to increase the effectiveness of the Council in responding to the challenges we face today.

A look at the Council's agenda over the past weeks makes clear the importance to all Member States of a Security Council that is able to respond swiftly, credibly and effectively to threats to international peace and security. On a very practical level, one reason the Council is able to function with at least some efficiency is that its size permits useful and manageable discussions and debates. All Council members are able to engage in debate over the course of a morning or afternoon. Draft resolutions can be worked through line by line within a time frame that allows all members to express their views. That procedure is more complex and time-consuming in United Nations bodies with a larger membership — when members are here.

The expansion of the Security Council must result in at least maintaining, if not increasing, the Council's effectiveness. We believe that the Council would be more effective if Japan — the second largest financial contributor to the United Nations, a strong and vibrant democracy, a defender of human rights and a leading contributor to peacekeeping operations and development worldwide — were a permanent member of the Council.

Over the past year, we do not believe the current proposals before the General Assembly have gained the broad-based support required for adoption and ratification as a Charter amendment. The time and energy expended on this issue over the past year has only hardened positions and increased divisions among members. We are no closer today than we were a year ago to achieving the broad consensus necessary to adopt and ratify a Charter amendment.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The time may therefore be right to move beyond these stalemated proposals. To get to a model for expansion that commends the broad support necessary, some of the key actors in the current debate will have to find new ways of looking at the issue.

As to the Security Council's working methods, the United States believes strongly that a number of changes are needed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's work. The United Nations Charter gives the Security Council sole authority over its own working methods. During the past year, the Council has re-energized its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to address the issue of the Council's working methods. My Japanese colleague Ambassador Oshima continues to do an excellent job as Chair of that Group. Earlier this week, the Council adopted a series of practices to make the Council's work more transparent. We will continue to participate fully and to support the ongoing efforts of the Working Group in the coming months.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): First and foremost, I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting and for a good opportunity to discuss the important issue of Security Council reform at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

As indicated at the 2005 world summit, Security Council reform is an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations. In that regard, we strongly believe that this sensitive issue should be resolved on the basis of a broad international agreement.

Acknowledging that reform must make the Security Council more representative, effective and accountable to the wider United Nations membership, Kazakhstan has repeatedly voiced its continued support for expansion of the Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent seats. We share the general view that the present composition of the Council does not sufficiently reflect contemporary geopolitical realities.

We are convinced that an expansion of the Security Council that is in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical representation and that takes into account the contribution of the States concerned to the development of the world economy and to global security would serve the interests of many States and would facilitate comprehensive reform of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the issue of the working methods and practices of the Security Council. Our delegation fully supports the view that the Council should continue to adapt its working methods in order to make its work more transparent and more democratic so that it can better serve the interests of the entire membership of the Organization. In that context, we welcome the efforts made by the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. Their proposals on the Council's working methods deserve our careful examination.

We also welcome the work being done by the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which includes efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work as well as to ensure stronger interaction and dialogue with the general United Nations membership.

Kazakhstan will continue to support and work closely with the President and other members in order to achieve the reform to which we aspire in the structure of the Security Council and its working methods. We strongly believe that reform of the Council is needed to make it more transparent, democratic and efficient.

Mr. Sen (India): I thank the President for convening this meeting. I am grateful for this opportunity — and for the very pleasant coincidence that I am speaking when you, Ambassador Diarra, are in the Chair once again, because you also happened to chair the last such debate in which I spoke (see A/60/PV.50). I think that we had a very rich and constructive debate yesterday, in terms of what you had asked for. Therefore, I will not go over those arguments or the arguments of the past or fight old battles, because that would only exhaust the listeners in this Hall, without really exhausting the subject. So, I will try to address reform of the Security Council in terms of the current conjuncture, the lessons of the United Nations reform process so far, the problems created by the Security Council and, flowing from that, what we see as the way ahead.

The Security Council, in our view, has not been able to effectively address problems related to peace and security, including those in the Middle East at this time. Therefore, it must focus fully on its Charter duty to effectively address such problems and to do well

what it is supposed to do rather than doing something that the Charter does not mandate it to do. Here, I think, the advice of the Bible is fully consonant with the Charter, because it says that it is better to see the beam in your own eye than to see the mote in your neighbour's eye. I believe that that is very useful as a general principle.

As for the United Nations itself, we find that its problems are not fewer than before, but rather greater, because the divide between the five permanent members and the rest is greater, the North-South divide is more profound and the imbalance between the General Assembly and the Security Council is sharper. So there is no real progress in that respect, given the current correlation of power.

This is something that is noticeable not only to us: well-informed and authoritative observers outside the United Nations have also clearly seen it. To cite an example, the high-level parliamentary delegation that visited the United Nations on 26 and 27 June wrote a report that was circulated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 10 July. The report says clearly that the Security Council has arrogated to itself far more power vis-à-vis the General Assembly than is warranted by the Charter. It concludes that until the Security Council is changed, it is impossible to foresee that the United Nations will truly change. It is no accident or coincidence that the revitalization of the General Assembly has been frustrated together with reform of the Security Council.

Some members of the Security Council, in our view, are the last followers of Francis Fukuyama, who, as we know, wrote "The End of History and the Last Man". He abandoned the idea of the end of history in a subsequent book, but they are still carrying that flag, long after he put it down. They remain opposed to a dispersal of quotas within the International Monetary Fund, to the addition of new permanent Security Council members — or at least to the idea of six new permanent members — and to the Council proffering more than one candidate for the post of Secretary-General to the General Assembly for its approval. In fact, this end-of-history syndrome is so acute that it is as if much of what has happened since 1945 — the enormous increase in United Nations membership, the triumphs of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles, the greater equality, the expansion of freedom — had never taken place, that history had stopped. Multilateralism remains a word; plurilateralism remains the reality. In fact, the logic seems to be that if the majority is not happy with that, so much the worse for the majority.

In yesterday's debate, one of my dear friends very pertinently raised the issue of ownership. I believe that ownership is extremely important. But where I respectfully disagree is here: we should not confuse the substance, which is the distribution of power, with the machinery or the method. Ownership is not a matter of consensus, which is only the machinery. If ownership indeed were a matter purely of consensus, then in that case in December 2005 we imposed the spending cap by consensus. Do we therefore really have a sense of ownership about the spending cap, or do we rightly believe — most of us, at any rate — that this is some kind of turnip ghost from an aborted Halloween party, a scarecrow that, fortunately, failed to scare and was therefore given a decent burial?

Take also the case of the Peacebuilding Commission. We all know that resolution 60/180, on the Peacebuilding Commission, was, again, passed by consensus in the General Assembly. But did that facilitate the strengthening of the United Nations and equitable geographical distribution, or indeed rapid operationalization of the Peacebuilding Commission? The Peacebuilding Commission is a very important case in point, for here we have the Security Council taking refuge in a technical legality while illegally going against the general will of the General Assembly as reflected in its consensus resolution. Very few remember that, quite correctly, the use of the definite article, "the", was specifically opposed by the General Assembly in the discussions, because it was felt, quite rightly, that "the" would mean that the permanent members would all automatically be members of the Peacebuilding Commission.

That reminds me of a couple of lines from Lord Byron: "How strange the mind, that very fiery particle, Should let itself be snuffed out by an article". But that is really what happened: it was snuffed out by an article. The Security Council thus also instituted a regime of dualism, by at the same time making the Commission subsidiary to the Security Council and ensuring that those who are on the Council's agenda would not, without its approval, be able to approach the Peacebuilding Commission for any assistance. That vitiated the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission, at its very origin, both to give optimal advice and to have optimal functioning.

I would therefore say that the question of ownership is not, as we have seen, a question of the machinery, of arriving at something through absolute consensus or unanimity. It is a question of the distribution power, a question of the limitation on arbitrary power. That is the question that has to be resolved through any reform of the Security Council.

The same body has another member State whose representative made this point yesterday: that we should not increase the number of permanent members, there are already permanent members, they have created problems, so why should we increase the number of permanent members? The whole point is that the only way one can really check arbitrary power is through the election of permanent members, who would then be accountable to the General Assembly and would be held accountable through a stringent review clause or clauses. The same member State that said that in fact had accepted this logic, as well as the logic of equity, when it made a statement, which I remember very accurately.

Its representative referred, at the time of the setting up of the Peacebuilding Commission, to the problems that had attended its birth. The same Member State at that time said that permanent members would be permanently represented. Surely those who put their sons and daughters in harm's way as peacekeepers deserve equal treatment. That is exactly what that member State said. Thus, all we are saying is that the logic that he applied to the Peacebuilding Commission is the same logic that ought to be applied to the Security Council.

As to the conclusion that can be drawn from that, rather than putting it in my own words I will put it in the words of the Secretary-General. The Assembly will forgive my making a very detailed quotation from the Secretary-General's remarks. The Secretary-General said the following in a recorded press conference in Geneva on 22 June:

> "[Member States] should pursue Security Council reform because it is part of the reasons why we have tensions in the Organization today .... [Quite] a lot of members feel that ... we cannot continue to have a situation where the power base is perceived to be controlled by a limited number of five Member States.
>
> "[E]ven] when you talk of management reform, it becomes a question of power struggle. I mean, people see it in terms of power — which bloc is gaining, which is going to lose. And of course, this perception of a power struggle was not helped by the attitude of the Permanent Five because when we set up the Peacebuilding Commission, they insisted that they should be reserved five seats, and they got them. And of course, when we started talking about the Human Rights Council, a similar demand was made, the membership reacted and they pulled back."

Yesterday, one of the member States said that the reform of the Security Council should not be a power game. But, as the words of the Secretary-General have just demonstrated, it is really keeping it unreformed that is a power game. Clearly, the logic of the reform process so far inexorably points to the need for a thorough-going reform of the Security Council, an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and a reform of its working methods. As we have seen, the process of reform has been certainly distorted, vitiated and, in fact, in many ways held back by an absence of reform of the Security Council.

I therefore think that we need to address the fundamental issue, rather than addressing some other issue through a solution that addresses something other than the fundamental issue. The point can be viewed as being analogous to the circulation of blood, which must flow evenly through all organs. When it does not flow through one organ, that organ tends to atrophy. That may be happen to the General Assembly. Hence the vital need for its revitalization. But that attempt has not been very successful thus far. We have therefore contended with attempts at encroachment on the powers of the General Assembly. We have seen — in the debates on procurement, certain aspects of peacekeeping and in thematic debates — that the non-permanent members are not really able to even check or halt, let alone roll back, the process of encroachment. That can only be done through the institutional memory and the strength that comes from permanence.

Hence, also, an interim solution would not address it. I entirely agree with the first speaker this afternoon that we are not here for the sake of reform for reform's sake, like art for art's sake. We are here to undertake reform that will be effective. The process of encroachment can therefore not be checked unless one has the sense of permanence and strength that can

check it. An interim solution cannot possibly provide that.

Similarly, any effectiveness has to be seen in the light of not just an arithmetical figure of low numbers. But, whether one is talking about size or about the goal of limiting and dispersing power, one has to see that all of this is a function of what the aim is.

If the aim is really limitation or dispersal of power — which would mean that the broader membership has power, or greater power, over its own destiny and feels a sense of ownership — then, in that case, it is clear that what we are suggesting would make the Security Council effective. That is because effectiveness would come even if there is a larger number of permanent members, because that would mean more optimal decisions — decisions that are not taken under any kind of bilateral pressure or other form of coercion. Therefore, with such decisions, the Security Council would not be able to encroach, or, at least, not be able to encroach to the same extent. That is what we mean by efficiency and effectiveness — not some kind of political Darwinism which is put forward under the guise of effectiveness.

Let us also consider — since we are on the subject of encroachment — the governance and the flexibility proposals that were made to the General Assembly. That was an attempt to refashion the General Assembly in the image of the Security Council — that is, decision-making and dominance by a charmed circle. Fortunately, it did not succeed, because otherwise the dominance of the Council would have been extended from the Secretariat to the General Assembly itself, by making it irrelevant.

Therefore, the kind of choice offered by the Security Council or by the powerful to the General Assembly can be summed up, I think, in the words of American humorist Woody Allen, who said that we are at a fork in the road, and that one part leads to absolute helplessness and despair and the other to total extinction. I hope the Assembly will have the wisdom to make the right choice.

We submit that, if we are going to get out of this, it cannot be through only a reform of the working methods. Such reform is important, and we therefore welcome the Small Five (S-5) proposal as an important contribution to this debate. The S-5 explanatory memorandum was circulated on 14 July — a very historic date. But that proposal reminded me of something said by Byron, to whom I referred earlier. Let me paraphrase him by saying that the S-5 is explaining metaphysics to the nation; I wish they would explain their explanation. Indeed, in both the explanatory memorandum and the remarks made by many of the speakers from the S-5, the point was made that the working methods concern everyone, whereas the enlargement concerns only a few. However, the point is that one cannot really have either new or enduring working methods without enlargement; therefore enlargement also concerns all, and not just a few.

What is more, it will not be possible — as I have said — to have fundamental stability of these working methods through purely a reform of the working methods themselves. We have seen this already in the case of the annual reports of the Security Council, where I think all are in agreement that there was a flash in the pan, a brief Indian summer, some improvement, and then a falling back once again to the bad or the good old ways, and those reports basically went back, or even further back, to what the earlier ones used to be.

One of the speakers yesterday referred to a very important resolution — resolution 267 (III) of 14 April 1949, if I am not mistaken. That resolution is indeed very important. However, let us look in some detail at the resolution itself. It was, as we know, adopted by the General Assembly on the report of the ad hoc Political Committee on working methods in 1949. The resolution says — and here I am quoting from memory — that the functions entrusted to the Security Council should be such as to exclude the application of the principle of unanimity of the permanent members — in other words, restrictions on the right of veto.

Similarly, it also states that the General Assembly should be able to make recommendations on matters that are being discussed in the Security Council, and that the Council should give access to non-members of the Security Council to the records of its private meetings. In addition, it states that the troop-contributing countries, and these are all quotations from that resolution, should similarly take part in decision-making — mind you, not in debates, but in decision-making — on the employment of troops from such countries.

Therefore I agree with Member States that what has been done in the Security Council today is totally inadequate and not enduring. But the 1949 resolution, in some respects, goes even further than the S-5 resolution, and therefore the more important question to be asked is: Why is it that these working methods have not really succeeded when they were thought of as early as 1949? The answer, again, is very simple. It is because, unless there are permanent members that are committed to these new working methods and are held accountable, through a review clause, to them, these methods cannot really be applied.

Nevertheless, I think that there is a great deal, in terms of commonality, between the working methods that we have proposed in the text submitted by the group of four and the working methods in the S-5 resolution. So, through a process of consultation, a lot can be done in terms of creating synergy and a common understanding.

I believe also that the role of the small States is very important. The Permanent Representative of Singapore has already demonstrated quite clearly, succinctly and superbly that any semi-permanent membership would be devastating for the federation of small States that he chairs — the 100 small States. Therefore, it is important that the small States take part in the day-to-day functioning of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, because more than 80 countries — half the membership — have never served on the Security Council. Most of the small States would not get a chance to do so more often than once every 40 years. Therefore both reform of the working methods and the taking of some members out of this competition, through our proposal, would ensure a place for the small States in the day-to-day life of the Organization.

My time is more or less up, but, before concluding, I should like to make a final point, which is that the greatest encroachment of the Security Council is in the sphere of law-making itself. In the case of law-making, for instance, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has said that the Security Council was right to set up the ICTY in terms of Article 39. However, this is slightly untenable, because the Charter has not conferred any judicial powers on the Security Council. Therefore, in terms of Article 29, the Security Council cannot give judicial powers to any subsidiary body, even if it has the power to set up a subsidiary body.

The Tribunal thus forgot the very important legal principle — my Latin is not perhaps as good as that of my colleague from the United Kingdom, who is sitting opposite me — but the legal principle is, if I remember correctly, *nemo dit quod non habet*, which means that one cannot give what one does not have.

Therefore, if we are to have a body where there would be a limitation on an arbitrary power and a dispersal of power which would give a sense of ownership to the broader membership and the belief that their destiny is in their own hands, and if we are to have a body where coercive diplomacy, arbitrary power, encroachment, lawmaking and setting norms would be a thing of the past, then it is important for us to look at an expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership and an improvement of the working methods. These must go together, because by separating them, we dilute, divide and disperse the substance.

Finally, therefore, I would say that we require a process of consultations, as many speakers have also hinted at and as some have stated outright. We are not for any kind of arithmetical figure here, because if you look at pure arithmetic, it would not be true to say what one of the speakers said: that there is no broad majority behind the proposal. Even if you look at those who spoke yesterday, 38 out of the 50 speakers spoke in favour of the expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, besides an improvement in working methods.

But we are not going by arithmetic. We are in favour of a broad agreement, a broad-based approach. Clearly, that has to be done step by step. The first step would have to be that those whose proposals are already on the table — proposals which, as I have demonstrated, are not mutually incompatible — namely, the African Union, the G-4 and the S-5 — should enter into a process of detailed consultation among themselves. We can then extend this process of consultation wider afield before we come to a conclusion.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening this debate. We consider the maintenance of a constructive dialogue to be useful even on those issues where stark differences of opinion remain and where a bridging of the gap is not yet within reach. Having substantially advanced in many other areas of reform of the United

Nations, we have reached a point where due attention should be given to reforming the Security Council, in terms of both its structure and its working methods.

Established as the primary instrument of the international community for the maintenance of international peace and security and as the corollary to the prohibition of use of force in international relations, which was the major achievement of the Charter, the Security Council needs, in the face of contemporary challenges, to preserve and continue to ensure its ability to adequately fulfil its crucial role. We need, therefore, in the light of past experience and in assessing prospective needs, to decide what transformation or adjustments might be necessary in the Council's composition, structure, working methods and place within the United Nations system. This overhaul needs to be far-reaching and must be based purely on substantive criteria with a view to increasing collective security and effective multilateralism, which is the only credible and promising alternative the international community has found to the rule of might.

In this regard, it should be recalled that it is the effectiveness of the Security Council in maintaining or restoring international peace and security that is the primary source of its legitimacy. The drafters of the Charter in San Francisco were fully aware that this unique organ could not be fully democratic and that its representativeness was primarily linked to the existing power balance and not to the international community as a whole. It was thus this teleological justification that was, and still is, the Council's main source of legitimacy. But it is not the only one.

The Council has to fulfil its responsibility in accordance with international legality. That is a fundamental prerequisite for adherence to the system by the international community of States. Furthermore, beyond balanced representation of the realities of political, economic and military power, the Council also needs a more equitable representation of the international community as a whole in its multidimensional, geographical, cultural and other diversity. Necessary elements of the reform process include enhanced relevance to modern challenges, transparency, accountability, further involvement of relevant stakeholders and of States concerned and ensuring that local realities are duly factored into the decisions. Uniform standards, fairness, equal treatment and credibility are also significant parameters of a successful Security Council responding to the expectations of humanity.

Based on those considerations, we need to go beyond the issue of the respective functions and competencies of the principal organs and adopt an integrated approach, taking into account the interdependence of the issues and the purposes of the actions of the United Nations. We should reflect on the issues, not in terms of powers and competencies and the marking of respective territories, but in terms of partnership, complementarity, synergy and contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Organization through a dynamic and interactive approach.

For us legitimacy is the key word. We previously mentioned it with regard to the structure and action of the Council. It also applies to the Council's working methods and to the way the reform process could move forward. Legitimacy will also be the arbiter of the debate between "wide consensus" and "vote". The approach of the reform process should not remain entrenched in controversy, and the reasonable basis of the course of action that will prevail should not be subsequently challenged.

The question of the reform of the Security Council has been discussed for many years now at various levels and in various formats. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), reform and expansion of the Security Council appear as an essential element in the effort to render the United Nations more relevant to today's world realities and challenges. Although it has not proven possible to reach agreement so far, the three draft resolutions that have been submitted have crystallized the debate and reflect major stakes, interests, concerns and visions of Member States. We also take note with interest, as a significant first step induced by the momentum this question has recently gathered, of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) presenting the results of the work of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We would also like to make special mention of the very interesting ideas, interesting at least from the perspective of smaller States, contained in the draft resolution (A/60/L.49) submitted by the group of five small nations on the working methods of the Council.

In concluding, I would like to express the hope that, having now before us all the necessary elements

for reflection on the central topic of Security Council reform, we will manage to move the process forward, to the benefit of the international community as a whole.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): It is with great pleasure, Sir, that we see you chairing our deliberations today. It has been exactly three months since we last met in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform on this same agenda item. Although we had a fruitful exchange in that forum, we do not believe that there have been any significant changes since then on reform of the Security Council.

In this regard, we wish to reinforce the view that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The Security Council needs to be reformed in a comprehensive manner, in terms both of its working methods and of expansion of its membership to make it more legitimate, inclusive, representative and transparent. The position of Member States on this issue is well known to all. However, we are dismayed by the lack of political will and the selectivity in addressing the various aspects of the reforms. There appears to be a push in some areas, while there is a lack of interest in other areas, particularly those involving the Security Council.

While expanding Security Council membership is conceivable, at least on paper, the reality is that it will be a difficult process because of the required amendment to the Charter. Moreover, the various changes under consideration would undoubtedly improve the Council's legitimacy, but certainly not its effectiveness. Therefore, the best hope for meaningful change in the Security Council lies in reinforcing pragmatic adaptations in working methods and in exploring new ones. While we would like to see progress in overall reform of the Security Council, the discussion on its working methods should not be linked to discussion on Council expansion. We should proceed with the areas where we can make progress, as reform is an evolution and an ongoing process.

We have seen the attempt of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — to piece together the fruits of the discussions of the Working Group into a resolution. The S-5 continues to provide good justifications as to why its draft resolution, as contained in document A/60/L.49, should be adopted.

As we have indicated in our previous statements, Malaysia supports the draft resolution in principle. However, we would have preferred a stronger formulation on the use of the veto. Malaysia has always advocated the elimination of the veto in conformity with the principle of sovereign equality as envisaged in the Charter. The exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council should be regulated so as to prohibit the unjust use of power at the sole discretion of its holder to overrule the wishes of the majority. The text as it currently stands does not adequately address the question of the veto. Based on current practice, this explanation can be found in the provisional verbatim records of the Security Council, which are circulated to all Members.

We hope that in the interest of the United Nations, we can find some way to adopt the draft resolution during this session. It is time for Member States to demonstrate their political will. Those who continue to oppose any reform of the Security Council have the moral responsibility to explain to the larger membership the reasons behind their decisions.

The recent developments in the Middle East and the lack of action by the Security Council further emphasize and demonstrate why the Council needs to be reformed. We all recognize the competence of the Security Council as envisaged in Article 24 of the Charter, whereby Member States have conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But to date there has been a lack of real effort on the part of the Council to address this deteriorating situation.

On the question of expansion of the Security Council, Malaysia fully supports the expansion of both categories of membership on the basis of geographical distribution, to make it more representative, reflecting the geopolitics of today. As we have said in the past, if there is no agreement on expansion of the permanent membership, we should proceed with expansion of the non-permanent membership while keeping the issue of expansion of the permanent membership on the active agenda of the United Nations.

In conclusion, Ambassador Diarra, my delegation once again expresses its support for you. We are confident that you will lead us to a fruitful discussion and a fruitful outcome.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): First of all, permit me to congratulate you, Ambassador Diarra, on your chairing of this very important debate.

My delegation is pleased that the General Assembly is meeting in plenary to discuss the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, in the context of follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. We recognize the importance of this debate, given the fact that the Security Council is the main organ of the United Nations vested with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Reform of the Council was also highlighted by our leaders when they met last year on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. The outcome document of the 2005 world summit (resolution 60/1) supports early reform of the Security Council, as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations, in order to make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

In that context, we, the States Members of the United Nations, are duty-bound to consider this issue on an ongoing basis. Therefore, it is imperative to continue to achieve progress in reform of the Security Council, in particular to make its composition much more equitably representative and its working methods much more transparent.

It is well known that the composition of the present Security Council does not reflect the current geopolitical and economic realities of the world. Therefore, for several years, at the highest level, Sri Lanka has expressed its concern about the lack of progress in addressing the question of equitable regional representation and has indicated its preferences with regard to an increase in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. In that context, we once again reaffirm our support for the initiative taken by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan regarding the expansion of Council membership. We have also expressed our wish to see a consensus emerge on the representation of Africa in the Security Council. We strongly advocate the inclusion of Africa in the process of reaching a final determination on the future composition of the Council. However, it is equally important to sharpen the focus on the question of non-permanent-member representation as well, so that the interests of the majority of Member States are also taken into account.

It is the belief of my delegation that reform of the Security Council should address both expansion of the Council and improvement of its working methods. We would like to emphasize, therefore, that the ongoing initiative taken by several Member States to improve the Council's working methods should be encouraged with a view to making progress in that regard as early as possible.

We believe that, in order for any reform effort to succeed, it is essential to conduct a broader range of consultations, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all United Nations Member States with a view to building consensus. We trust that, with innovation, compromise and determination, it is not an impossible task to seek a convergence of views on this important question.

My delegation is convinced that a reformed Security Council that reflects the new political and economic realities of the world will go a long way towards enhancing the Council's legitimacy and efficacy. What is needed now is our collective political will to work towards genuine reforms.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would first like to express my delegation's appreciation to the President for convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the issue of Security Council reform.

The Republic of Korea fully recognizes the importance of Security Council reform in the overall reform of the United Nations. We believe that this issue should be addressed in a way that contributes to our common efforts towards the goal of making the United Nations stronger, more efficient and better able to meet new challenges.

In that vein, the Republic of Korea remains firm in its support for a reformed Security Council that is more effective, representative, transparent, democratic and accountable. We share the position of the Uniting for Consensus group, that the best way to achieve those goals is through an increase in non-permanent, elected seats on the Council rather than through the addition of permanent members. The Uniting for Consensus

proposal for Security Council reform is fair, constructive and pragmatic. By allowing regional groups to determine their own methods of rotation, it provides more opportunities for Member States, large and small, to serve on the Council.

Turning to the issue of the working methods of the Security Council, we welcome the proposal by the five Member States of various ways to enhance the transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of the work of the Council. We hope that the efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council can help build consensus and create a spirit of cooperation that will enable us to move forward.

The Republic of Korea believes that constructive dialogue among all Member States is necessary on the issue of Security Council reform. We are ready to engage in serious negotiations with any other Member States, in order to achieve our common goal of reforming the Security Council in the right way, which we recognize is a key aspect of the reform of the United Nations as a whole. We look forward to an open and transparent process of consultation and negotiation with a view to reaching the broadest possible agreement.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation to the President for convening this important meeting today. My delegation considers questions regarding the reform of the Security Council as very important: without this, comprehensive reform of the United Nations cannot be complete. Also, reform is our common obligation as provided in paragraphs 153 and 154 of the outcome document of the 2005 world summit (resolution 60/1), where we committed ourselves to continuing efforts to reform the United Nations in order to make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy.

We have an obligation to the issue of the increasing the membership of the Security Council, as well as to the question of improving its working methods. As we have repeatedly stated on previous occasions, Slovakia is firmly committed to a reform of the Security Council. First of all, it needs to be made more representative, more effective and more transparent. In that context, we believe that the Security Council needs to be enlarged in both categories of its membership: permanent and non-permanent. The present membership structure is clearly imbalanced and, in a number of aspects, does not truly reflect the current situation in the world.

It seems only appropriate that enlargement in the permanent category should also include countries of the global South. Only such expansion could rectify the existing imbalance in the composition of the Council. We duly note that several developing and industrialized countries with political and economic potential have staked a claim for permanent membership. We wish to reiterate our explicit position that an enlarged Security Council should include Germany and Japan as new permanent members.

The working methods of the Security Council need to be enhanced. Some progress has already been made towards making the work of the Security Council more transparent. In that connection, Slovakia welcomes and fully supports the outcome of the intensive work of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions as already presented in the debate by its Chair, the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Oshima. Slovakia, as a current non-permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to take an active part in the work of the working group.

Mandate review is an essential element of the summit reform agenda, one that will help make the whole Organization, including the Security Council, more relevant, more efficient and more effective in its work. The Security Council's ad hoc committee on mandate review has been established. The objective is to facilitate a practical, real-world review of the Security Council's existing mandates as called for in the summit outcome document, and the work of the ad hoc committee has seen its first results.

Reform of the United Nations is a complex process. At the core of this reform undoubtedly remains the reform of its most powerful organ, which enjoys unique authority under the United Nations Charter and international law. Despite the major obstacles to be overcome, we should not relent in our efforts to achieve meaningful reform of the Security Council, so that the Council can continue to play an effective role as the principal United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Allow me, on behalf of El Salvador, to express our gratitude for the convening of this meeting to complement the informal consultations of the General Assembly and to review once again the issue of the overall reform of the Security Council, which is of great interest to us. We believe that the international community is going through a critical time in the area of peace and security in many regions of the world, which makes clear the urgent need for progress in Security Council reform.

El Salvador has firmly and with determination supported the need to adjust the number of members and the working methods of the Security Council to the changing state of affairs in today's international relations. The modern geopolitical reality, plagued by immense challenges for international peace and security, demands a greater degree of responsibility for all States Members of the United Nations and challenges us to begin serious negotiations designed to find a solution that can win the support of all Member States.

At the 2005 world summit, our heads of State or Government agreed to explore two models for Security Council reform. We must acknowledge that to date, there has been a deadlock. We should therefore redouble our efforts towards achieving an open, democratic and transparent process of negotiation among all Member States, designed to find a way to comprehensively reform the Security Council.

El Salvador is convinced that comprehensive reform of the Security Council is a responsibility that is shared by all Member States and not the privilege of one particular group of countries. It should be added that, in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, the consequences of a breakdown of international peace and security in any part of the world affect all countries in one way or another. For those reasons, the decisions that the Security Council may take or may fail to take will have increasingly severe repercussions in a number of areas. At this moment in particular, let us recall that the Security Council has an important unfinished task in the Middle East: contributing through its decisions and actions to the restoration of international peace and security by seeking negotiated solutions to the crisis.

From the perspective of the world economy, this kind of conflict affects, inter alia, the international prices of oil and its derivatives, causing a virtually uncontrollable rise in those prices. That forces many developing countries to allocate enormous amounts of our financial resources to pay the oil bill — resources that could have been devoted to development.

We are therefore convinced of the complexity of comprehensive reform of the Security Council. It could require the adoption of progressive measures that can be accepted and understood by the international community as a whole. Such a gradual approach could in turn help to create an atmosphere of mutual trust among all parties, making it possible to continue to intensify the negotiations on other substantive aspects involving more complex methodology in order to achieve a fully democratic, transparent and inclusive Security Council.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that El Salvador is prepared to move forward on the path of negotiation in a spirit of openness to new possibilities in the quest for a solution to this dilemma, which undoubtedly has global repercussions.

Ms. Moses (Nauru): My delegation is grateful for the opportunity to discuss agenda item 117, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", and item 120, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

Nauru is most heartened at the progress achieved to date in implementing the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). Despite that, however, we have yet to reform all the pillars that uphold the United Nations system.

Reform of the Security Council has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for more than a decade. Virtually all Member States agree that the Council should be expanded, but we have failed to reach an agreement on the details and the Council's working methods. My delegation was disappointed when this issue was put aside to make headway on other aspects of reform, as we believed that it would have been best to resolve the issue before September last year. We are of the view that taking no action to simultaneously reform all principal organs of this body not only obstructs United Nations reform in its entirety, but also creates a kink in the system that will only weaken the Organization's structure and erode its effectiveness. As the Secretary-General has stated, addressing the membership of the General Assembly,

> "in the eyes of your peoples the difficulty of reaching agreement does not excuse your failure to do so. If you want the Council and the Council's decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 4*)

Present-day global upheavals demand that we address this issue urgently and without further delay. The Security Council no longer reflects today's geopolitical realities, but rather a 1945 balance of power that no longer exists.

Nauru was a sponsor of the reform proposal submitted by the Group of Four countries (A/59/L.64). It is our view that it is still the only draft resolution that provides a proper and complete framework for change to improve the current structure of the Security Council. It is the only draft resolution that protects the interests of all States, large and small, without bias towards any particular region or group.

My delegation also welcomes and appreciates a number of other substantive draft resolutions. Some of them have already been introduced, while others have not. But all of them call for change in the Security Council's composition and working methods. In that respect, we call on all proponents of those draft resolutions who are serious about Security Council reform to come together quickly in order to bridge the gap of familiar differences through constructive dialogue, open-mindedness and flexibility, so that we can achieve real reform.

It is time to tackle this issue in a realistic and collective manner. Let us not shy away from our responsibilities. Rather, let us, in the words of the Secretary-General, be much more creative and much more daring, look at the issue in a broader context and really try to make progress.

Finally, Nauru reaffirms its support for permanent membership for Brazil, Germany, Japan and India in a reformed and expanded Security Council.

Mr. Elgannas (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express our sincere appreciation for the convening of this meeting on Security Council reform. This is a particularly important issue, given the challenges to international peace and security that we are facing at present in Lebanon and in Palestine.

Indeed, many innocent lives have been lost to the Israeli war machine that has been deployed against Palestinian lands and against Lebanon on the pretext of the right to legitimate self-defence. We are disappointed to see that the Security Council has been unable to adopt robust measures to put an end to the killing in the region.

The responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security cannot be carried out without democratic reform of the Organization, and particularly of the Security Council, which remains an undemocratic body in terms of representation and performance. We should transfer the Council's mandate to the General Assembly, which is a more logical and objective body, particularly in the light of the constant and increasing threats to international peace and security. The Assembly, the body that is most representative of the peoples that make up the United Nations, is particularly concerned about the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the context of the lack of equitable representation in the Security Council, we must support the rightful, democratic and just demands made by the Group of African States. Africa is the only continent that does not have permanent representation in the Security Council, and its non-permanent representation is not commensurate with its size and its concerns regarding the maintenance of international peace and security. Thus, we support the demands made by the African Group at its various summits and as presented here by the representative of Algeria.

The African position, as articulated by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group, is as follows. First, Africa must be given two permanent seats with the right of the veto; secondly, five non-permanent seats must be reserved for the continent — that is, two additional seats compared with the three seats currently occupied by Africa; thirdly, the selection criteria for candidates must be reviewed, and that is the responsibility of the African Group itself.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reaffirm that it is willing to work closely with the Assembly to ensure the success of these consultations in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all.

Mr. Abdelsalam (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to say how much we appreciate this meeting, which represents a good opportunity to discuss once again an important and vital issue that had almost fallen into oblivion and no longer appeared at the top of the priority list for reform of the Organization. We believe that this issue is one of the pivotal elements of the reform process, which is designed to restructure the Organization so as to enable it to respond to and tackle current challenges, shoulder its responsibilities and do its utmost to build a multilateral world governed by the principles of justice and equality.

My delegation too endorses the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

We wish to see comprehensive system-wide reform taking into account the accelerated changes in the modern world, making it possible for us to tackle current challenges and respecting the legitimate aspirations of the developing world and in particular Africa.

The differences of opinion and viewpoint that prevailed throughout earlier discussions on this matter and the current deadlock should not discourage us from addressing this issue, because it is vital to arrive at consensus on the question of Security Council reform by overcoming all obstacles. In order to do so, we need to look dispassionately at the benefits of such reform and display a sense of responsibility and flexibility in order to achieve our goals.

My delegation deeply regrets the delay in the reform of the Security Council and the blockage in the process, in spite of the call issued by world leaders in September 2005, which should have led to immediate action to reform the Council. This is a key aspect of reform of the United Nations as a whole. My delegation therefore believes that efforts should be stepped up to honour that commitment. Otherwise, all the efforts made so far and those to be made in future will fall far short of those commitments and will ultimately lead to the collapse of the reform process, in which we have invested sincere, arduous and persevering efforts.

My delegation is dismayed by the Security Council's encroachment on the competence of other United Nations bodies, even as it does not fulfil all its own responsibilities. Here we should underline the complex nature and tenseness of some situations — situations which in many areas represent a genuine threat to international peace and security and in the face of which the Security Council, voluntarily or otherwise, has been powerless, for reasons known to all. This means that the need for reform is even more urgent and is indeed an absolute necessity.

Reform of the United Nations is particularly urgent, because it is dictated by tragic events, such as those we have seen in the Middle East, in the face of which the Security Council remains impassive, like an external spectator awaiting intervention from some other body. The solution does in fact lie in the creation of another body in which structural defects will be corrected so as to make the Council immune from such defects — a new Council that does not submit to threats and punishment, and one with no unjust recourse to the veto, which has led to the death and maiming of old people, women and children and the squandering of their rights.

We fully endorse the African position, which appears in the document A/59/L.67, as reaffirmed by the African summits held at Sirte and Khartoum, and we are committed to engaging in a fruitful and responsible dialogue in order to tackle the challenges we face and carry out the desired reform.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): Today's meeting on Security Council reform is most timely, and I thank the President for having convened this important meeting.

Member States have been actively engaged in the process of United Nations reform. We have also made significant achievements in that process, culminating in the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. As we continue with this process, we must all work for Council reform. Indeed, the Security Council must be reformed to make it more representative, efficient and transparent. It must also reflect today's global realities.

At the 2005 summit, our leaders expressed their support for the early reform of the Security Council. We all must work to achieve the goals set by our leaders. Council reform must take into consideration contemporary political and economic realities as well as the aspirations of the developing countries. To that end, we strongly believe that the Security Council should be expanded in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. The Council must be more representative so as to enhance its effectiveness and

legitimacy. In that regard, Myanmar strongly calls for the adequate representation of developing countries in the expanded Council, in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories.

We also continue to believe strongly that any reform of the Security Council must be comprehensive. Its expansion must be accompanied by further improvements in its working methods and its decision-making process in order to make it more transparent and democratic. Member States have conferred on the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and it must be reformed to better serve the interests of the entire membership of the Organization.

My delegation appreciates the initiatives taken by the Council in recent years to promote transparency and improve its working methods, including the issuance, on 19 July, of the note by the President (S/2006/507) concerning the improvement of the working methods of the Council. We also note with interest the recent initiative by five members, which have submitted a draft resolution on the Council's working methods. We regard this initiative as a step in the right direction.

We welcome the frequent holding of open debates in the Security Council, which give non-members of the Council the opportunity to express their views on matters affecting the membership at large. We would urge the Council, in adopting resolutions or decisions with regard to such debates, to fully take into account the views raised therein by States that are not members of the Council.

We also share the view that greater transparency and increased participation apply with regard not only to Security Council decision-making but also to the work of its subsidiary organs, to promote transparency in the important work entrusted to them.

With the gradual broadening in both the volume and the scope of the work of the Council, we are now witnessing the Council's encroachment on the powers and mandates of the General Assembly. My delegation shares the concerns expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement and fully subscribes to the principled positions of the Movement pertaining to the cardinal requirement to uphold and respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to maintain the relationship between the Security Council and other principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter.

As we continue with the process of reform of the Security Council, we must ensure that members of the Council adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter and resist any attempt to discuss issues that do not pose a threat to international or regional peace and security.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): At the 2005 world summit, our leaders expressed their support for an early reform and expansion of the Security Council as an essential element in the overall effort to reform the United Nations so as to reflect today's realities.

Reform has been under discussion for the past 13 years in working groups specifically created for that purpose. In recent months, an extensive debate has been under way within the United Nations, and the issue of Security Council reform has also been addressed, particularly during the April deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

Security Council reform also involves an improvement in the working methods of the Council. In that respect, we take note of the proposal made by the group of five small nations (S-5). Likewise, intensive efforts have been made during the past few months in the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, under the leadership of Japan, to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work and its interaction with non-Council members. We welcome the decision of the Security Council to endorse the recommendations of the Informal Working Group, and we strongly urge the Council to fully implement those recommendations.

With regard to Security Council enlargement, certain proposals have been submitted, and, so far, it has been impossible to achieve consensus on any of them. It is a positive sign, however, that we all share, to a large extent, the reform goals aimed at achieving a more modern and accountable Council. In that respect, we welcome the efforts made by the African Union to facilitate the relevant discussions.

We continue to believe that the comprehensive reform and expansion of the Security Council will bring it in line with contemporary realities and

reinforce the collective security system of the United Nations Charter, thus contributing to the strengthening of the United Nations as a whole.

My country continues to favour the Council's enlargement in the permanent and non-permanent categories. Such an enlargement would increase the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the Security Council, thereby enhancing its multicultural and multi-dimensional character, and rendering it more representative of the world we live in today.

In that respect, we would like to reiterate our support for the draft resolution submitted by the group of four, which Greece co-sponsored. We fully align ourselves with the principles contained therein, and we express our appreciation at the improvements that the authors have been making to the text. We encourage all members to work together constructively, and hope that they will do so, with a view to reaching an agreement that can be supported by the largest possible majority in the Organization.

In order to effectively face today's serious global threats and challenges, the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, has to be urgently reformed. Therefore, we share the Secretary-General's view that Council reform cannot be further delayed, and, in that respect, we hope that, by the end of this year, we will all be in a position to take this much-awaited action.

Mrs. Taj (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania associates itself with the statement made by Ambassador Youcef Yousfi of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

The General Assembly, and the Organization as a whole, have recorded important achievements since the adoption of the World Summit Outcome document last September. They include the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission.

However, the failure to reform and expand the Security Council remains a glaring shortcoming. All our assumptions about good governance and legitimacy will ring hollow as long as the appeals — indeed, demands — of a majority of Member States for reform of the Security Council remain unfulfilled.

The United Republic of Tanzania notes the initial steps undertaken within both the Security Council and the General Assembly with a view to reforming the working methods of the Council. We therefore welcome the efforts exercised by the Council's Informal Working Group Concerning the Council's Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We recognize that the Working Group has been working hard under the chairmanship of Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan. We commend that effort, meant to enhance the Council's efficiency. We hope that this exercise will be a continuous process.

We also wish to commend the initiative undertaken by the group of five small nations (S-5) — Singapore, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Costa Rica and Jordan — urging the reform of the working methods of the Council. We have every reason to believe that their initiatives enjoy significant support within the larger membership of the United Nations.

On the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council, we would like to thank President Eliasson and his two co-Chairpersons, Ambassador Majoor of the Netherlands and Ambassador Bethel of the Bahamas. The co-Chairpersons have done well in the consultations they had undertaken and the strenuous efforts they made. However, we regret that their diligent labour and the intensive bilateral and group consultations have not paved the way for a solution to this pressing question.

Nothing could illustrate better than the Security Council the imbalance of power structures in the Organization. Its expansion is not only a question of governance but of inclusion in the decision-making process and of greater legitimacy. Maintaining the status quo is not in the interest of our collective membership. The developing countries are the principal victims of this imbalance. It is this lack of equality and representation that Africa seeks to redress.

The challenge is still one that can be overcome. It is also for all of us to determine how we can better reform the Council, one of the important organs of the United Nations.

Mr. Kebret (Ethiopia): I would first of all like to associate myself with the statement made by the Chair of the African Group regarding the issue under discussion. Let me also express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for arranging this formal meeting on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

My delegation regards Security Council reform as an initiative to bring the Council into line with the realities of international politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We all agree that the Security Council must improve its representativeness to better reflect today's world. Furthermore, Security Council reform should enhance the Council's democratization, accountability, credibility and efficiency.

We have conducted discussions in this forum on Security Council reform for more than a decade, only to achieve no consensus among Member States on how to expand the Council, although some progress has been made on the issues of procedures and working methods.

My delegation is of the view that Security Council reform should unite, not divide, Member States. We need to work hard to create consensus on this very important agenda item and the ongoing United Nations reform process as a whole. The political determination of States to achieve comprehensive Security Council reform, as reflected in the speeches made by our leaders during the summit last September, must be maintained and strengthened.

My delegation believes that Council enlargement must be consistent with the sovereignty of States and equitable regional representation. Ethiopia firmly believes that any expansion in the membership of the Security Council should ensure enhanced representation of the African continent, as has been stated time and again by States and Governments. We believe that the Security Council needs to reflect present world realities and become more responsive to the aspirations of Member States, including the African States.

In view of this, my delegation believes that it is high time for United Nations Member States to re-engage themselves with more determination, to address the issue of Council reform. The strong momentum created in the previous deliberations on the issue should not be reduced by other United Nations reforms, although those are equally important.

Mr. Khaleel (Maldives): The resolve of the international community to reform and revitalize the United Nations has never been stronger. The momentum generated by the reforms process over the past year has been remarkable, and we should not let the goodwill and understanding that we have witnessed recently diminish before real and meaningful reforms can be implemented.

Since the world summit last September, much indeed has been achieved. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the creation of the Human Rights Council and the various reforms that have already been agreed, on the administration and management of the Organization, are major achievements that we all can be proud of in that regard. However, it is equally important that we make advances in our deliberations to reform the Security Council.

For more than a decade, we have discussed the need to reform the Security Council to enable it to better reflect present-day realities, without much success. The Maldives believes that the time has come to break the impasse and take bold and concrete decisions. The Maldives has always supported the enlargement of the Security Council. We believe that reform of the Council should include the enlargement of its membership — both in the permanent and the non-permanent member categories — as well as a thorough examination of its working methods and decision-making process.

At this juncture allow me to acknowledge with appreciation the work being done by the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, aimed at enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the Council. We are fully convinced that a more transparent and more representative Council would enjoy increased and strengthened authority and effectiveness.

While we welcome and remain open to the various proposals that are before the Assembly, in our view, the proposals of the group of four nations on the reform of the Council would form a good basis for a resolution on that important issue.

Sound multilateralism is crucial to our quest for a better world in an age of globalization. Strengthening the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, fostering economic cooperation and harmonizing international reforms towards a better future are not impossible tasks.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): I thank the President for convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The fact that the issue of Security Council reform has generated so much interest both in the

corridors of the United Nations and outside for so many years points to the fact that the world is striving for a restructured and rejuvenated Security Council — in terms of both its size and its working methods — to address present-day geopolitical realities.

The various proposals that are on the table in the United Nations concerning reform of the Council, while at times mutually exclusive, are guided by the aim of making the Security Council more effective, efficient and democratic. However, the differing perceptions on how to reach the goal of Security Council reform have made our task difficult, if not impossible. We believe that if we continue to work in a spirit of cooperation, the fruits of Security Council reform will be within our reach.

The delegation of Nepal, like many other delegations, holds the view that the membership of the Security Council should be expanded in both categories to reflect the reality of the contemporary world. In that context, the aspirations of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan to serve on an expanded Security Council as permanent members merit serious consideration. We also believe that the bid of the African countries to be represented on the Council as permanent members should receive serious consideration.

It is the belief of my delegation that there is a need to make separate arrangements for the enlargement of the Security Council in order to ensure the greater participation of small Member States on the basis of the role they have played, or the potential role they might play, in the maintenance of international peace and security. In the interest of moving forward, there should be expansion in the non-permanent category of membership, even if it takes time to take decisions on the permanent category. There is no doubt that it is easier to address less complicated issues first.

The second issue related to the reform of the Security Council — the issue of improving the working methods of the Council — is an issue that is no less important than that of enlargement. The proposals of the group of five small countries on the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, as contained in draft resolution A/60/L.49, contain many useful ideas. We also appreciate the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) on efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work.

My delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, His Excellency Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan, and his able team for the hard work they have done.

The delegation of Nepal is firm in its belief that the working methods of the Security Council should be transparent, inclusive, effective and efficient. We should ensure that no organ of the United Nations exceeds the limits of its powers and functions as accorded by the Charter.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I join others in expressing gratitude for the convening of this meeting to enable delegations to express their views on the question of reform of the Security Council. My delegation hopes that with the new vigour created by the recent achievements of Member States — the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council — and by the progress, albeit modest, in the implementation of other commitments contained in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of last year's world summit, we will soon arrive at a solution that enjoys broad support.

My delegation has always maintained that reform of the Security Council is one of the most important issues in the process of United Nations reform. What we all have been calling for and striving for is comprehensive reform of the Organization. Without reform of the Security Council, the main United Nations body, charged with the task of maintaining international peace and security, no reform of the Organization can be comprehensive.

That having been said, we believe that no reform of the Security Council can be comprehensive in the absence of either its two equally important elements, namely, reform of its composition and reform of its working methods. My delegation may be flexible with regard to the sequence of the steps to be taken, but let me reaffirm our fundamental position that in the end, both elements must be achieved. After all, everyone is aware of their complementarities.

The shortcomings existing in the Security Council's working methods result from the Council's composition, which does not reflect the changes in the composition of the Organization itself, of which the Council is a principal organ. Since the Council's membership was increased to 15 in 1963, the

membership of the Organization has increased by 79. That change is so substantial that it cannot be ignored.

It is with that understanding that, since the early stage of the ongoing debate on Security Council reform, my delegation has joined the majority of Member States in proposing that Council membership be increased in both categories — permanent and non-permanent — and that developing countries, which constitute two thirds of the United Nations membership, be more adequately represented on the Council. Our understanding, and thus our position, remain the same.

It should be pointed out, however, that increasing or not increasing the membership of the Security Council is not a matter of sharing a cake or a piece of cake. The change in Council membership that we support thus cannot, and must not, be an end in itself. This membership change must help achieve our final objective of ensuring the legitimacy of all of the Council's actions. That legitimacy can be enhanced only through improvements in the Council's working methods.

The Non-Aligned Movement has, on more than one occasion, made clear its position that reform of the Security Council should not be confined to the question of membership. The adoption of measures to ensure that the Council is genuinely democratic, transparent and accountable in its work is crucial and constitutes an indispensable element of comprehensive reform.

In that connection, and with regard to the practice of the veto, I wish to reaffirm Viet Nam's position that, pending its eventual elimination, the exercise of the veto should be limited to actions taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. In addition, draft resolution A/60/L.49, submitted by the delegations of Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Singapore and Switzerland — the group of five small nations, or "Small Five" (S-5), contains many specific proposals in other areas that constitute an excellent basis for continued work aimed at improving the Council's working methods. We highly appreciate the contribution of the S-5 and stand ready to continue our consultations with them and with other Member States on this matter.

The members of the Security Council, in their efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of their work as well as their interaction with non-members — as reflected in the note issued on 19 July 2006 by the President of the Council (S/2006/507) — are committed to implementing the measures contained in the annex to that note, which are related to many aspects of the Council's work. We welcome these efforts by Council members, especially the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and we sincerely thank the Chair of the Working Group and the President of the Security Council for their contributions. As a first-time candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Council, we particularly value the measures to assist newly elected members as detailed in part XII of the annex.

In conclusion, permit me, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, to assure the Assembly of our continued commitment to working with the President and with all other Member States in striving to accomplish one of the most important tasks aimed at making our Organization stronger and more responsive to today's realities.

Mr. Penjo (Bhutan): My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the convening of this plenary meeting to continue with our efforts to reform the Security Council — an issue that has been before us for a very long time. It is obvious that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council. Like many others, my delegation supports comprehensive Council reform. Only through a comprehensive approach can we transform the Security Council into a more representative, democratic and legitimate body.

My delegation believes that the proposal (A/59/L.64) of the Group of Four (G-4), which we fully support, meets the expectations of the wider membership because it would make the Security Council more effective and reflective of the current world situation. It also contains proposals to change the Council's working methods in order to make that body more transparent and inclusive. That is of particular interest to small countries like mine, as it would allow us to be more closely involved in the Council's work. My delegation therefore believes that the G-4 proposal provides a good basis for the General Assembly to proceed with the all-important task of bringing the Security Council into line with contemporary realities and challenges.

My delegation believes that reform of the Security Council is long overdue and that the General

Assembly must seize the opportunity provided by the G-4 proposal. We hope that, through this process, the General Assembly will be able to arrive at a formula that will command the widest possible support of the membership.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela attaches particular importance to the reform of the United Nations in general, which is an essential process we firmly support due to the current need to democratize the Organization and to strengthen the General Assembly as the key deliberative, and most representative, body of the United Nations. In that regard, we support the speedy reform of the Security Council as a key component of the United Nations reform process, so as to make it more representative of the international community and reflective of modern geopolitical realities while giving it greater legitimacy and democratic spirit, in keeping with what was set out in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2).

Venezuela reaffirms that the membership of the Security Council must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with the inclusion of developing countries among the new permanent members. Expansion should aim at achieving better and greater representation of developing countries. Likewise, as regards the democratization of the United Nations, Venezuela believes that it is essential to eliminate the power of the veto. In that regard, we very much look forward to the outcome of the consultations being held among the Group of Four, brotherly African countries and other interested States to reach a common position that will make it possible to put together a joint draft resolution on Security Council enlargement.

But reform of the Security Council should not be limited solely to expansion of its membership. It should also address other aspects, such as the agenda, working methods and decision-making processes of the Council.

With regard to improving working methods, we view with interest draft resolution A/60/L.49, which was put forward by Costa Rica and other States. Our delegation has transmitted its observations regarding the text. We hope that our contributions will be taken into consideration.

The Council should improve its working methods to enhance the participation of non-member States in its work, improve accountability and increase transparency. The number of private meetings should be kept to a minimum, and there should be more public meetings and open debates to hear the views of non-member States and to make it possible for those States to have a greater part in the discussions. It is important for the Council to take into account the opinions of non-member States. We have noted that the Council has the habit of taking decisions immediately after the statements of non-member States. They should listen to the opinions of those States first, then consult among themselves, while taking those opinions into account, and finally take a decision. Open debates should be real opportunities to take into account the opinions and contributions of non-member States.

With regard to the agenda, the Council should focus on problems relating to threats to international peace and security and avoid encroaching on issues that may fall within the purview of the General Assembly or other organs of the United Nations. We have also noted that the Council has increasingly had recourse to Chapter VII of the Charter, using it as an umbrella to take up issues that do not necessarily constitute immediate threats to international peace and security. Chapter VII should only be relied upon as a last recourse.

In recent years, the Council has been quick to threaten or authorize coercive action in certain situations, while remaining silent and impassive in other cases. In particular, Venezuela believes that, pending the achievement of the ultimate goal of eliminating the power of the veto, we must find ways to limit and reduce its use, including mechanisms whereby the veto could be overridden. It is inconceivable that opposition from one country out of the 192 that currently make up the Organization can prevent the United Nations from taking action on issues having to do with international peace and security, as has occurred with regard to the situation in the Middle East, especially as regards the recent attacks against Palestine and Lebanon. That indiscriminate use of force — which has caused, and continues to cause, hundreds of dead or wounded civilians, including innocent women and children — and included the destruction of much civilian infrastructure, has also created a serious humanitarian crisis.

Venezuela would like the Council to exercise its responsibility to find effective solutions to international conflicts, while at the same time enforcing international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, so as to promote peace, which is the basic goal of the Organization and of the international community.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): We thank the President for convening this meeting to discuss agenda item 117, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", and agenda item 120, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

The widespread support for continued deliberation on those subjects is indicative of the importance the items represent to the majority of the membership of the United Nations. Fiji has been a consistent supporter of the calls to reform the Security Council, in particular as regards the expansion of its membership. We also continue to support calls for the taking of concrete measures in follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit.

The Secretary-General's words on the reform of the Security Council continue to resonate in this Hall as we again discuss the issue. He said, and we agree, that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. Until we heed those words and take positive action, the public perception that there is no real reform will continue to afflict this institution as it attempts to bring about substantive and meaningful reform.

The current scenario of a world torn by war and strife demands a stronger and effective Security Council, one which is also representative of the current geopolitical realities and has every Member's interest at heart. To lend the Council the credibility and legitimacy it deserves, its membership must reflect the broader membership of the Organization, including by granting permanent representation to members from both the developed and developing worlds. To retain the status quo is to hang on to an old structure that was shaped by the world of 1945, does not heed the changing times and is oblivious to calls for reform and change. Many already categorize the Council as the exclusive domain of the privileged few.

While we want to remain optimistic, we are worried that the energy and momentum to keep the reform initiative moving forward is quickly waning. Frustration is slowly creeping in. Until something constructive is achieved from the exchanges that have taken place, the outlook for real reform will, unfortunately, remain dim in the eyes of many. A few countries, seeking to avoid any decision on this matter, take refuge in claims for consensus and in allegations regarding the disruptive nature of the issue. Their actions will only contribute to the perpetuation of current inequities in the structure of the Organization and dampen the aspirations of Members eager to bring about a more balanced distribution of power in the work of the Security Council.

Fiji reiterates its support for draft resolution A/60/L.46, which has been proposed for discussion. We believe that the draft resolution encompasses the interests of the majority and can be the basis of any change or review. It is indeed a step, albeit small, in the right direction, and we urge members favourably to consider the draft resolution in the spirit in which it is being proposed.

We are once again indulging in an exercise that has been ongoing for well over a decade — discussing the issue of reform of the Security Council. As mentioned, the energy and the mood are there for some real action to take place. To further delay would only bring frustration and fatigue and send the wrong message to those we serve that we did not seize the opportunity but preferred to wait. We hope that the cost of delays and procrastination will not be too high.

Mr. Romero Martínez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to say how gratified we are to be able once again to resume our discussion of the important items entitled "The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" and "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

As a founding Member of the United Nations, Honduras firmly supports all endeavours that seek to render our organs more efficient, more up-to-date and more responsive in the historic undertaking to which we are committed.

The creation of a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic world remains a legitimate aspiration on the part of our peoples. For that reason, we remain committed to what we have already defined here as important areas in which we need to take action: development, peace and collective security, human

rights and the rule of law, and a clear and tangible strengthening of the United Nations system as a whole.

For some time, in these corridors, from this rostrum or, perhaps, working in a spirit of hope in our impersonal offices, we have been engaged in the process of elaborating significant positions and outlining the carefully crafted solutions with which we must provide today's complex and difficult world, in a spirit of justice and legality.

Certain goals have been met. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the new Human Rights Council represent a promising step forward in strengthening and improving our institutions. The commitment to, and the challenge of, strengthening the United Nations remain, with a view to increasing its authority and promoting its efficiency. We must also give fresh impetus to the United Nations intergovernmental organs so as to adapt them to the vital needs of the twenty-first century, which calls for an appropriate level of cooperation and coordination.

We continue to support the speedy reform of the Security Council, and we reaffirm the responsibility entrusted to it by Member States in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, pursuant to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Our country, Honduras, and our delegation are eager to cooperate actively in every effort aimed at strengthening our Organization, making it more broad-based, transparent and efficient. Above all, we seek to foster greater participation, on an equal footing, of all States on the basis of the peaceful settlement of disputes, and especially respect for human dignity, which is sacrosanct.

Mr. Landemoen (Norway): Norway's position on Security Council reform is well known. As we stated in our plenary meeting a year ago, on 12 July 2005, our main priorities have been to ensure that the Council operates coherently and efficiently and that the composition of the Council reflects the current configuration of the United Nations membership. Consequently, we support an expansion.

There are several reasons why Norway believes that expansion of the membership of the Council is necessary. Over the last 60 years, the overall membership of the United Nations has almost quadrupled. The Security Council should reflect that growth in order to ensure the Council's legitimacy and efficiency. Norway is also an advocate for the interests of small countries in the rotation for non-permanent seats, as well as for the representation of African as well as Latin-American and Caribbean countries, which, in our view, have been underrepresented in the Council.

That means that Norway supports a balanced enlargement of the Security Council: an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, with small countries and developing countries duly represented.

We cannot discuss Security Council expansion without addressing the question of veto rights. We have consistently encouraged permanent members to refrain from exercising their veto power. The Norwegian view has been that, in order to ensure an efficient Council, veto power should not be extended to the new permanent members of an enlarged Council. We thus welcome earlier statements made by the Group of Four (G-4) that it is their intention not to exercise the right to veto.

Reform of the Security Council is more than a question of expansion. Equally important is the improvement of the Council's working methods. The draft resolution proposed by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland aims at improving the dialogue between the General Assembly and the Security Council. While the draft resolution fully respects the Security Council's competencies, it points, in a positive manner, to areas where cooperation should be deepened. It is Norway's view that an enhanced and structured dialogue between the General Assembly and the Council would lead to a strengthening of both.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I wish to thank President Eliasson for having convened this meeting on reform of the Security Council.

The timing for this debate is right. Ten months ago, 170 of our Heads of State and Government met and called for reform of the Security Council.

Since the summit, we have adopted a number of important reforms, including, among others, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. The time is now ripe to balance those reforms with reform of the Security

Council. After all, the Security Council plays an important role in all reform processes.

The world continues to look to the United Nations for solutions. Over the years, the Security Council, a principal organ of the United Nations, has lived up to its calling. But with more reform, the Council could do more in preserving international peace and security. Inaction by the Council in containing certain conflicts, for political reasons, has been at great expense to the membership of this institution. The sad experience of my country is a case in point: lives lost in an ethnic conflict could have been saved if enough attention had been given during our hour of need. My delegation values the concept of the responsibility to act, which is an element within the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) that should be one of the principles that guides the reform process in addressing current and future conflicts. In particular, we would like to see a strengthened relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly and between the Council and regional organizations.

In trying to reform the Council, we must look at its enlargement through the addition of both permanent and non-permanent seats as well as its working methods. For the last 13 years, since the establishment of the Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, a number of proposals for reform have been put on the table for discussion. We must now look at what can be done. In doing so, we would do justice for our people, enabling the Security Council to increase its legitimacy and making the Council more responsive to meeting today's security threats. After all, there are countries that can afford to wait, while there are those in vulnerable situations that would like to see reform happen sooner rather than later.

Solomon Islands sees the world from a simple perspective. Nothing happens in this world without cost. Hence, we believe that those who have the capability and ability to do more should step up to the challenge and play a more prominent role in preserving peace.

As far as process is concerned, my delegation would like to see both the enlargement issue and the working methods issue be given equal attention. In our view, the Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution (A/59/L.64) is comprehensive enough to be a starting point for negotiations. My delegation identifies with the G-4 proposal and also remains supportive of elements of the draft resolution (A/60/L.49) of the group of five small nations and looks forward to having more discussion on a transparent, inclusive and accountable Council.

In closing, Solomon Islands, as a least developed small island State, cannot afford to have this issue drag on for so long. We must collectively concentrate on finding common ground and move on to address other issues of reform in making our multilateral system more effective and more efficient.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President for having convened this meeting to debate an issue whose importance is known to us all: reform of the Security Council. As we all are aware, the 2005 world summit added its support to the reform of the Security Council, in order to make that body more representative, effective and transparent, with a view to strengthening the effectiveness, legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. Our heads of State or Government also recommended that the Security Council should continue to adapt its working methods, enhance its accountability to Member States and promote transparency in its work.

This debate provides us with an opportunity to assess the progress that has been made so far and, on the basis of that, to set out the way forward. The position of my country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on Security Council reform is well known and has always been clear. On many occasions, our position has been stated before the General Assembly by our Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We favour an expansion in the membership, both of permanent and non-permanent members — I stress, both permanent and non-permanent — representing developed and developing countries, on the basis of equitable geographical representation and taking account of the relative weight of different countries. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize that reform of the Security Council must also include measures which would make the Council's decision-making process more transparent.

At the moment, Africa, which is a large continent, is not represented among the permanent members. In our view, that is a major injustice. As with all other

peoples throughout the world, the people of Africa deserve greater respect. Within this process of Security Council reform, everything should therefore be done to ensure that a new enlarged Security Council is a body which includes permanent members and non-permanent members from all regions, including Africa.

Today's world is going through rapid and complex changes. Since 1945, major changes have taken place. In our view, the Security Council should adapt itself to the new global realities. On that note, we must all work together to reform the Security Council, the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, in order to make it more legitimate, transparent and effective.

Mr. Arifi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened these meetings, which will allow us to exchange views on an important question which was on our agenda in 2005 during the preparation of the outcome document (resolution 60/1) that was adopted by our heads of State or Government at the 2005 world summit.

Indeed, we all recall the efforts made and the energies expended during the first part of 2005, following in particular our consideration of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) and that of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards security, development and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). The reform of the United Nations saw particular divisions on the question of the enlargement of the Security Council.

More than ever, it is necessary that we follow up in a determined way to the decisions taken by our heads of State or Government. Significant progress has been made, in particular through the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. These are extremely significant examples which should prompt us all to maintain that momentum as we address the issue of reform of the Security Council, which we deem a key component of the reform of the United Nations system.

All the results achieved since last December have been reached in the context of a consensus, which indicates the desire of us all to ensure that there is a solid basis for progress towards strengthening this body, which must be adapted to the current state of international relations in the wake of 60 years of change.

As in the past, my delegation continues to believe that we will all gain from having a Security Council that is more balanced and more representative, with improved working methods and greater transparency in its decision-making. That will allow it to enhance its authority and to increase its legitimacy so that it can better fulfil its mandate as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In order to implement the decisions taken by our leaders at the September summit, we must give high priority to the question of reform of the Security Council, as an important element of overall reform of the United Nations. The Council's expansion must be considered in parallel with reform of its working methods.

The working methods of the Security Council have been the subject of a number of specific proposals, in particular the recommendations made by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, headed by Japan, whose work we commend. We also commend the text produced by the group of five small nations (S-5), which, we believe, deserves careful study, because it addresses important elements related to this reform and offers some specific responses to the concerns and expectations of Member States.

Morocco believes that, while seeking to increase the membership of the Security Council, we should also ensure that this body remains fully effective, so that it can fully meet its responsibilities in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security.

While recognizing the importance of Security Council reform, the Kingdom of Morocco hopes that such reform will not lead to any division between its members or create splits that could prejudice the objective of strengthening that body — an objective to which we all are committed.

We fully understand the legitimate aspirations of some countries to take part, on a permanent basis, in the work of maintaining peace, but we believe also that the Council should extend its consultations beyond its members to all those countries that are concerned and to troop-contributing countries whenever it is fulfilling its responsibilities in the context of a crisis or in a

given situation. The legitimacy of the Council's action is at stake.

Given the importance of cultural or religious differences as factors in the emergence of current crises, it is important to take this aspect into account in our discussions on Council expansion, and to address not only the question of geographical representation but also the issue of States' belonging to certain groups having similar cultural and belief systems.

In that respect, Morocco remains true to its cultural heritage and to its African and Arab Muslim sense of solidarity, and it will spare no effort in working towards expansion of the membership of the Council on a democratic, equitable and responsible basis.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): I wish to express my deep appreciation to President Eliasson for his inspired and persistent efforts to schedule this plenary debate before the summer break. He was right to do so, as Security Council reform is part and parcel of the comprehensive vision for change set out by our leaders at the United Nations summit in September 2005.

Half of the United Nations membership and representatives of political and regional groups in New York will have given their views on Security Council reform by the end of the day. It is, we have to admit, a rather unusual level of participation for the end of July.

Reforming the main world body entrusted with the maintenance of peace and security clearly remains a top priority on the agenda of many States Members of the United Nations, as is, implicitly, the broader political or institutional reform of our venerable Organization, which should accordingly be given adequate priority in the context of the overall process of the pursuit of change in the United Nations.

Mere functional adjustment seldom can promote the achievement of genuine and effective reform. That is one of the important reasons underpinning Romania's longstanding position in favour of meaningful reform of the Security Council. Our views have been expressed extensively on a number of occasions, both here in New York and bilaterally in the capitals.

Our assessment of the current state of affairs is that, on the one hand, the Security Council is effectively discharging its duties under the United Nations Charter, while, on the other hand, changing its composition to better reflect today's geopolitical realities is a much-needed step. The former conclusion does not mean that there is no room for improvement in the Council's working methods, and I take this opportunity to commend Japan's dedicated endeavours to that end from within the Council.

Along those lines, it is timely also that we have the opportunity to dwell, on this same occasion, on the draft proposed by the group of five small nations (S-5), which contains many valuable ideas.

I would like to make two more brief points at this late hour on a Friday afternoon. The first is that Romania is ready to embark on a meaningful consideration of the possibility of enlarging the composition of the Security Council, with the preservation of the features that make it an effective and credible main body of the Organization.

Judging from the latest debates on the matter, favourable political winds seem to be blowing in the direction of pursuing an enlargement of the Council, to which all Member States — potential beneficiaries, to a greater or lesser extent, of reform — should contribute and thus find their aspirations duly reflected. Indeed, such enlargement is a process that cannot succeed unless it is broadly owned.

The second point is one that has been touched upon in the earlier intervention of our Armenian colleague, who spoke on behalf of the Eastern European Group as Chairman for the month. Echoing the position of principle he voiced at the time, my delegation would like to put on record the fact that it considers that the share allotted to our region in the various enlargement proposals discussed so far is minimal.

The realistic view that Eastern European countries have taken with regard to reform of the Security Council should not, however, be misinterpreted. Without the possibility of a fair share in the eventual outcome, no representative of those countries would be in a position to persuade political and popular constituencies to endorse the proposed enlargement. Many seem to forget at times that the Eastern European Group is one of the five regional pillars upon which the United Nations currently rests. Even if the Group itself did not exist, 23 countries from that region are Members of the United Nations, and they will no longer accept consignment to oblivion of that for which they stand.

Romania believes in reform of the Security Council and, more broadly, of the world Organization, in which all of us — large, medium, or small nations, whether more to the North or more to the South, whether first to see the sun rising or first to see it setting — are taking this journey together.

Mr. Vila Coma (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): At the September 2005 world summit, our heads of State approved reform of the United Nations. In that process, Security Council reform was recognized as an important element because of the Council's links with the other organs of the United Nations system. Today — and we can welcome this fact — most of the objectives set for reform have been attained, including the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council and the commencement of the activities of the Ethics Office.

However, reform remains incomplete, despite the discussions on Security Council reform that have taken place over the past year. Compounding that situation is a whole decade of work in which the project of Council reform has often been the subject of attempted negotiations to adapt the Council to the new requirements of the Organization.

A response to that situation can be put off no longer. Reform of the United Nations without reform of the Security Council would be incomplete. It would further aggravate certain imbalances and dysfunctional elements already existing within our Organization.

True reform of the Security Council must be based on a broad consensus regarding greater representativity in keeping with today's geopolitical realities — an essential element if the Council is to be provided with greater legitimacy, authority and effectiveness. Likewise, a framework of partnership based on genuine representativity for all countries, from the largest to the smallest, must be respected.

The Principality of Andorra supports reform based on principles that will ensure a more accurate reflection of global realities. Indeed, expansion of the Security Council has been supported by our Government through statements made in various general debates of the General Assembly.

With regard to reform of the Security Council's working methods, we welcome the progress made recently through the Council's adoption of the note of its President of 19 July 2006 (S/2006/507). The note reflects unanimity concerning the urgent need to improve the working methods.

While Andorra welcomes that approach, we continue to fully support the draft resolution entitled "Improving the working methods of the Security Council" (A/60/L.49), submitted by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. We believe that the draft resolution contains all the essential elements to make it an excellent working tool to ensure that the Council's various activities are more dynamic and transparent and far more participatory, while safeguarding its power and its prerogatives.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express our gratitude for the convening of this important meeting to address a vital issue of great interest to the United Nations and concerning the very credibility of the Organization in the face of the many challenges it must face and the crises that the world is now experiencing. This burning issue concerns ensuring greater and more equitable representation within the Security Council and improving the Council's working methods, as agreed at the September 2005 world summit.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the principle of equitable geographical representation within the Security Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership. We must enhance and revitalize the Council so that it can fully carry out its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security in keeping with the mandate of the international community. In that way, the Security Council can prevent conflicts before they arise and settle crises before they worsen and cause civilian deaths and great material damage.

For the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it is extremely important that States — however big and powerful they be — avoid taking unilateral decisions. We must work together in the Security Council, because it is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. We must respect the Council's resolutions and ensure that they are implemented. All States must be treated equally, and without selectivity or double standards, and we must maintain the Organization's prestige and credibility, which have suffered so much damage in recent times.

My delegation has participated in all the consultations on this issue at all levels, both within and outside the Organization. We have listened to the views

and statements of Member States, which were serious and constructive contributions. However, if those ideas are not implemented, they will remain mere ideas. It is important that all members of the Security Council, especially those with permanent seats, shoulder their responsibilities and play their full roles in a logical and rational manner so that the Council can cope with current changes and developments and, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, meet the aspirations that led to the creation of the United Nations.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank the presidency for the convening of this debate, which has given the General Assembly an opportunity to deliberate once again on an issue of such importance for the entire United Nations membership, thus helping us to take a concrete step forward towards what Uruguay regards as one of the most substantial of achievements: revitalization of the General Assembly.

It is very gratifying to meet here together to discuss how to continue making progress in the arduous task of United Nations reform, which we have been striving to achieve for some time now. Although we are very optimistic, we believe that it will still require a significant effort on our part.

Uruguay, as we have previously stated, agrees that there is a need to reform the Security Council, both to adapt it to current circumstances and new challenges and because any human creation can and must evolve if it is to continue to be effective. My country believes that it is therefore necessary that the Security Council expand the number of its members. But we also wish it to be a more efficient, representative, democratic and transparent organ.

That is why we attach key importance to improving the working methods of the Council. We have noted the unanimous call of previous speakers in that regard, and we are sure that, on the basis of this same analysis, we shall be able to achieve tangible results much more quickly.

In this regard, we are particularly grateful for the proposal that was made by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5), consisting of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland — in draft resolution A/60/L.49, which we believe will be an excellent basis for our future work.

We welcome the fact that members of the Security Council are also working in the same direction. We look forward to the speedy implementation of the recommendations made by the Council's Informal Working Group chaired by the Permanent Representative of Japan.

We reaffirm that Uruguay, as a country which since the creation of the United Nations has spoken out against the use of the veto, cannot support any solution which would envisage an increase in the members of the Security Council that would be granted that power.

Uruguay vigorously supports the strengthening of the framework of international rules established to promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It is our view that the question of human rights is no longer the exclusive preserve of the domestic jurisdiction of States. For this reason, we also believe that nothing should prevent implementation of the principle of "the responsibility to protect". We fully agree with Member States that have spoken in this forum that in all cases of genocide or other humanitarian catastrophes, collective action may be carried out through the Security Council without the exercise of the veto.

Uruguay, which can support the model (see A/59/L.64) presented by the Group of Four (G-4), without the veto, hopes to continue to collaborate with the necessary flexibility in the next stages of our consideration of these issues, on which we hope that there will be open, direct, inclusive and transparent negotiations.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to express my delegation's considerable admiration for the skill with which you have guided this debate on the reform of the Security Council, which is reaching its final stages.

United Nations reform received decisive impetus at the September 2005 summit, thanks to the renewed commitment of heads of State or Government to increase the effectiveness of that principal instrument of multilateral cooperation, in order to meet the many challenges and threats that humanity is facing. The results that have already been achieved through informal consultations to implement the summit decisions in various critical areas represent for those who contributed to them a real cause to be proud.

In view of the enthusiasm that was demonstrated in achieving progress on those issues, it is rather difficult to understand the deadlock that Security Council reform suffers, given that the need for this reform is seen by us all, and how clear it is that the membership of the Council and its working methods are not well adapted to the geopolitical realities prevailing at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

My delegation appeals to all Member States to work with greater determination to make progress on the reform of the Council in order to give the United Nations the means to better meet its central mission, that of maintaining international peace and security.

Now that passions have cooled, the moment has surely come to undertake a new cycle of inclusive and participatory negotiations in order to find the appropriate solutions to ensure the representativeness and legitimacy of the Council. We must create the best conditions to enhance the authority that it is given by Member States.

Africa, which is the continent that suffers most by the current configuration of the Council, has clearly expressed its legitimate demands. My delegation aligns itself fully with the statement that was made here by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the African Group. He faithfully recalled the common position expressed by the heads of State or Government of that continent on the issue of Security Council reform.

The longer we take to achieve enlargement of the Council in both categories of membership, the longer the injustice against Africa will continue, due to the fact that there is no provision for its representation on the Council in the permanent member category. We call upon all Member States to recognize the place that Africa deserves in the United Nations.

In the same spirit, the Republic of Benin reaffirms its support for the candidature of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan for permanent seats in the Council, which would reflect their confirmed desire to assume the responsibilities which go along with their status as great Powers. Their membership would also recognize their clear contribution to promoting international peace and security and to supporting the ideals of our Organization.

My delegation welcomes the progress that the Council has achieved on its own initiative in terms of reforming its working methods. Benin believes that all measures that can be introduced to increase the transparency of the Security Council, as it is now constituted, should be undertaken without delay while awaiting its enlargement.

We pay homage to the Permanent Representative of Japan for having effectively guided the Council's work in this area. My delegation believes that this effort to improve the working methods of the Council should be continued in the light of the proposal set out in draft resolution A/60/L.49, which was submitted by the group of five small nations. These recommendations are extremely relevant.

Given the close link between the working methods and the membership of the Council, it is clear that the working methods should be reviewed as a whole, including with regard to the control of the use of the veto and the adoption of a new rules of procedure once the new membership of the Council has been agreed upon and implemented.

In closing, I would like to repeat the appeal for a new cycle of negotiations on the substantive issues concerning enlargement. The inertia has lasted for too long. It is vital that we end the deadlock surrounding this issue. Let us together wind up the clock of reform in order to give the United Nations a Security Council which is better adapted to effectively meeting the deepest aspirations of our peoples, because it will have become more representative, transparent and effective as it carries out its mission.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): My delegation welcomes the decision to convene this meeting to take stock of the situation regarding the reform of the Security Council and to consider future action.

We share the analysis of the current situation given by the Permanent Representative of Italy in his capacity as the focal point of the Uniting for Consensus group. The time is right for the Assembly to engage in the type of substantive negotiations on this subject that have eluded it thus far. Rigid national positions need to the give way to an endeavour to identify a collective solution that responds to the shared concerns of the entire United Nations membership and to the imperatives of achieving far-reaching reform in the international system.

Malta approaches the issue of Security Council reform from the perspective of a small Member. Small

countries form a sizable and significant constituency within the United Nations membership. As the representative of Pakistan has pointed out, the perspective of small Member States is often more closely aligned with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations than those of larger States with specific national interests and objectives.

For us, the weaknesses that are eroding the efficacy and legitimacy of the Security Council strike home with particular urgency. We view with very great concern those instances that betray an inability by the Council to respond in a timely and effective manner to emerging security and humanitarian crises. The erosion of legitimacy that affects the Council in instances where its response is either late or ineffective is, for small States more than for larger ones, an erosion of what constitutes the main safeguard of their own security.

Many agree that among the manifestations of the Council's weaknesses are its inadequate accountability to the United Nations membership as a whole, the partial way in which its membership reflects the membership of the United Nations and the sometimes lopsided nature of the criteria it applies in its responses to different situations. A meaningful reform process needs to grapple with those weaknesses in a consolidated manner. It is in that spirit that we share the view of those who maintain that the reform must deal with the dual issues of working methods and membership together, not separately or in sequence.

Accountability is not simply a function of reporting and transparency. It is just as much a function of the method and manner in which the membership is chosen. Timely and effective responses are indeed affected by the availability and abuse of the power of the veto. But they are also affected by the balance and range of representation within the membership of the Council.

In that spirit, while welcoming the action taken by the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as recognition of some of the problems that exist, we believe that that action remains inadequate, both in terms of substance as well as of procedure.

On the other hand, we believe that the approach taken by the group of five small States (S-5) is much more effective. The S-5 draft resolution (A/60/L.49) is to be commended for tackling head-on the more critical and sensitive issues, including the question of the veto. At the same time, the S-5 initiative can readily be integrated within the broader process of reform, which, in our view, must inevitably deal also with the question of enlargement.

With regard to enlargement, my delegation is among those that believe that the way forward does not lie in concentrating on the question of permanent membership. Rather, we need to take a more flexible and comprehensive approach to the subject by examining formulas that reaffirm, rather than erode, the principle of rotation. As a small State with limited expectations for membership on the Council, we consider all proposals in terms of the rotation options for membership that they open up to the membership as a whole. We are not convinced by the argument that an increase in the number of permanent members will create more space for the rest of the membership. On the contrary, we see an enlargement that earmarks for permanent membership some, or even most, of the additional seats as a lost opportunity to enhance rotation in both principle and practice. At the same time, we believe that the idea regarding permanent regional seats, as distinct from permanent national seats, if developed further, would offer good scope for accommodating the sometimes contrasting objectives of different members.

At this stage, we need to identify ways to move the negotiations process from its long-standing inertia. One point that seems to have emerged from the current discussion is that, as yet, we do not even have the main elements around which consensus can be built. In that context, the idea has been mentioned that we could explore the idea of pursuing a transitional solution. Combined with the idea of regarding permanent regional seats as distinct from permanent national seats, that could offer a new, and perhaps more productive, avenue for our discussions.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in this debate on Security Council reform under agenda items 117 and 120.

At this stage, I would like to make three comments.

First, I would like to express my satisfaction and the significant number of speakers in this rich debate: 86 representatives took the floor. That attests to the particular attention that Member States attach to the issue of Security Council reform. Moreover, many

echoed the appeal made by our leaders during the 2005 world summit, namely, that the reform of the Security Council is a central component of the overall reform of the United Nations. Our leaders also expressed the wish that the Council be reformed without delay, so as to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the spirit of dialogue that characterized this debate, as well as the relevancy of the views expressed. Nearly all members indicated that the status quo is not a viable option. In particular, speakers emphasized that the reform of the Security Council, which should focus both on expansion and on improving working methods, was crucial to the credibility of the United Nations as a whole, as well as to the strengthening of the authority and legitimacy of the Security Council. In that regard, a real desire emerged from the debate to undertake Security Council reform in a spirit of flexibility, in order to arrive at a solution that can garner the broadest support possible.

Thirdly, as regards following up on the reform of the Security Council, many speakers felt that the time had come for reform of the Security Council to be carried out. I therefore encourage members to continue to try to reach agreement on the various options likely to lead to a follow-up process aiming at the effective reform of the Security Council. In that regard, I call on members to apprise the President of their views, so that we can together succeed in this important aspect of United Nations reform.

The Assembly has thus concluded the current stage of its consideration of agenda items 117 and 120.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/60/PV.97

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

97th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 29 August 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Swe (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reopening of the consideration of item 161

The Acting President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/60/989 and A/60/992, circulated under agenda item 161, entitled "Extension of the term of the permanent judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994".

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 161 at its 91st plenary meeting, on 28 June 2006.

In order to enable the General Assembly to consider the letter dated 25 August 2006 from the Secretary-General and the letter dated 29 August 2006 from the President of the Security Council, both addressed to the President of the General Assembly, contained in documents A/60/989 and A/60/992, respectively, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 161.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 161?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on documents A/60/989 and A/60/992, may I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 161?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 161 (*continued*)

Extension of the term of the permanent judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Letter dated 25 August 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/60/989)

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06-48116 (E)

Letter dated 29 August 2006 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/60/992)

The Acting President: In his letter (A/60/989), the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has requested that Judge Solomy Balungi Bossa, a national of Uganda, be authorized to continue to serve in the *Butare* trial, which is expected to continue into 2007. The Secretary-General, in his letter, recalls for the Assembly that Judge Bossa was elected by the Assembly as an ad litem judge on 25 June 2003 for a term of four years, ending on 24 June 2007. The Secretary-General also recalls for the Assembly that article 12 ter, paragraph 2, of the statute of the International Tribunal provides that

> "During their term, ad litem judges will be appointed by the Secretary-General, upon request of the President of the International Tribunal for Rwanda, to serve in the Trial Chambers for one or more trials, for a cumulative period of up to, but not including, three years."

The Secretary-General informs the Assembly that Judge Bossa was appointed by the President of the International Tribunal to serve as an ad litem judge in the *Ndindabahizi* trial effective 28 August 2003, and then in the *Butare* trial effective 20 October 2003, and that the *Butare* trial is expected to continue into 2007.

The Secretary-General also informs the Assembly that it is highly desirable that every effort be made to ensure that the International Tribunal remains in the best position to meet the target dates in its completion strategy. In that connection, allowing Judge Bossa to continue to serve in the *Butare* case until its completion will definitely assist in achieving that objective.

The Secretary-General further informs the Assembly that, in accordance with Assembly resolution 57/289, should the cumulative period of service of ad litem judges amount to three years or more, this will not result in any change in their entitlements and benefits and, in particular, will not give rise to any additional entitlements or benefits other than those that already exist and which will, in such an eventuality, be extended pro rata by virtue of the extension of their service.

Consequently, the Secretary-General would appreciate approval from both the Security Council, as the parent organ of the International Tribunal, and the General Assembly, as the organ that elects its judges, that Judge Bossa can continue to serve in the *Butare* trial until its completion.

In the letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly contained in document A/60/992, the President of the Security Council transmits the text of Council resolution 1705 (2006), of 29 August 2006, whereby the Council, inter alia:

> "Decides that notwithstanding article 12 ter of the statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and notwithstanding that Judge Solomy Balungi Bossa's elected term as an ad litem judge of the Tribunal will, in accordance with article 12 ter of the Tribunal's statute, end on 24 June 2007, she be authorized effective 28 August 2006 to continue to serve as a judge in the *Butare* case until its completion."

If there is no objection, I propose that the Assembly decide to endorse this recommendation of the Secretary-General that was endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1705 (2006) of 29 August 2006.

It was so decided.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): The Government of Rwanda welcomes the June 2006 decision by the Security Council and the General Assembly to extend the terms of 11 permanent judges and today's decision to extend the term of one ad litem judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The Government of Rwanda recognizes that those decisions will allow the Tribunal's work to continue with regard to the cases currently before it, thereby making it possible to implement the completion strategy. We call upon the Tribunal to continue to work with the completion strategy in view.

The authors of genocide still at large should not continue to escape justice, even after the Tribunal's work comes to an end, in 2008. The Tribunal's completion strategy should not be considered as a way out, allowing the international community to evade its responsibilities and obligations to bring all accused genocidaires before the ICTR or Rwandan courts. We welcome all appropriate measures aimed at ensuring

that those suspected of genocide are brought to trial even after the completion of the Tribunal's mandate. The international community should not allow notorious authors of genocide such as Felicien Kabuga and Augustine Ngirabatware to continue to escape justice. Were that to occur, it would both send a bad signal and set a bad precedent for all of us as regards our commitment to prevent crimes of genocide.

With regard to the transfer of cases to Rwandan jurisdictions, the Government of Rwanda is now working together with the Prosecutor of the ICTR to resolve all outstanding issues in such a way as to allow for their transfer. In that connection, Rwanda's criminal code is now being amended in parliament in order to review the issue of capital punishment. We welcome early indications that the Tribunal will proceed with the first transfers once these outstanding issues are resolved.

Concerning the transfer of convicted persons, the Government of Rwanda is of the view that those judged guilty by the Tribunal should be imprisoned in Rwanda, where the crimes were committed. That is very important not only for the sake of justice, but also for reasons of reconciliation. That issue has been debated between the Government of Rwanda and the ICTR. The Tribunal's main concern was the lack of prisons meeting international standards. That issue is resolved; two years ago, the Tribunal inspected a prison built with that objective in mind and found it to conform with international standards.

The Government of Rwanda thanks the Tribunal for the good cooperation. We are prepared to continue working with it to resolve the outstanding issues so that the completion strategy can be a success.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 161?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.

United Nations A/60/PV.98

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

98th plenary meeting
Thursday, 7 September 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 12

Prevention of armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/891)

Draft resolution (A/60/L.61)

The President: Prevention of armed conflict is a moral imperative. It is a human necessity to save lives and protect civilian populations. It is a political necessity for the credibility of international cooperation, in particular the United Nations. It is also an economic necessity, both for the countries involved and for the international community, because of the enormous costs of war and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. Early action should be the natural reaction to early warning. Prevention must thus be a moral, political and economic priority for the United Nations and its Member States.

With that in mind, I am particularly grateful for the progress report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict. His personal commitment to early action and to preventive diplomacy has been pivotal in creating a culture of prevention in all activities of the Organization. His first comprehensive report on the subject in 2001 is a cornerstone for the Organization's agenda in the field of prevention.

Based on the Secretary-General's 2001 report, the members of the General Assembly, in resolution 57/337, adopted a comprehensive plan of action for the preventive work of the United Nations. The Security Council also adopted resolution 1366 (2001) on its role in the prevention of armed conflict. Those documents form a solid basis for our continued work.

The United Nations has an essential role to play in preventing armed conflict by virtue of its mandate, its legitimacy, its universal membership and its broad-ranging activities and competence. One of its principal tasks under the Charter is the maintenance of international peace and security — in other words, the prevention of war.

Preventive diplomacy must engage all parts of the system, including the specialized agencies, funds, programmes, regional and field offices, and the international financial community. We need also to be in contact with civil society and non-governmental organizations on those issues.

From the review annex to the report of the Secretary-General, it is evident that many of the activities of the United Nations have, directly or indirectly, a conflict prevention dimension. That is most welcome. As pointed out by the Secretary-General, Article 33 of the Charter obligates Member States to seek peaceful settlements of any dispute that may endanger peace and security. Any Member State can, according to Article 35, bring disputes and situations to the attention of the Security Council or the General Assembly. I could not agree more with the Secretary-General when he encourages Member States to make more effective use of such tools for pacific

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06-48640 (E)

settlement of disputes: negotiation, mediation, conciliation and judicial settlement.

On a personal note, I may say that, to me, Article 33 of the United Nations Charter constitutes diplomatic poetry. In it, we have eight methods of preventive diplomacy, which, I regret to say, are rarely used.

Such preventive action should be proportional to the intensity of conflict. If measures such as fact-finding missions and the range of tools under Chapter VI of the Charter do not suffice, further steps — such as deploying peacekeeping missions and actions under Chapters VI and VII — must be considered.

The gist of the Secretary-General's report is the importance of using the full capacity of the United Nations. With the Department of Political Affairs as the focal point, along with the Secretary-General's good offices, effective system-wide coherence is vital, bringing in actors in human rights and political, economic, environmental and social development. Promoting democracy, respect for human rights, protection of refugees and sustainable development worldwide must be part of a comprehensive preventive strategy. We need to work both with the more short-term measures, described as operational prevention, and with long-term, so-called structural prevention, addressing sources of tension and the root causes of the conflict. The Secretary-General points to some crucial issues that we, the international community, need to address, such as natural resources, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation and migration.

I would like to make the linkage here to the reform agenda of the United Nations and the importance of a strengthened United Nations. The United Nations is in a unique position to address those challenges in a comprehensive way. Many of the reforms that Members decided on in the world summit outcome last year, and that the General Assembly implemented during this session, will in fact be important tools in preventing armed conflict. The Peacebuilding Commission has the potential to make a difference to countries emerging from conflict in choosing the way of sustainable development instead of relapsing into conflict, helped also by the international community.

The Human Rights Council is to strengthen the standing of human rights within the United Nations system. The United Nations Charter itself recognizes the importance of universal respect for human rights and for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being that are necessary for peaceful relations among nations. The new Human Rights Council will contribute, through dialogue and cooperation, towards the prevention of human rights violations and respond promptly to human rights emergencies, as stated in the resolution that the General Assembly adopted on 15 March.

The full realization of the Millennium Development Goals and a committed approach to poverty reduction and sustainable development are prerequisites for the maintenance of peace and security. The world summit outcome reaffirmed the interlinkage between development, peace and security, and human rights. Our leaders made substantial commitments at the world summit in the field of development — commitments that were followed up through a resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 June.

The world summit outcome welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund. I am encouraged that the Fund has now decided on the financing of the first projects.

I would not end without referring to the importance of the commitments made in the world summit outcome on the responsibility to protect. That was a major achievement on which we must all build. The most important part of that concept is the responsibility to prevent ethnic cleansing, mass killing and genocide, and to supply States with the capacity to protect their own populations. That is a crucial task for the United Nations and for all of us as Member States.

I sincerely hope that the General Assembly will continue to play an active role in preventing armed conflict, in accordance with its role under the Charter. The General Assembly is not only the engine for normative work, but also the highest forum for expressing the common concern and the political will of the international community. I look forward to an active and constructive debate. Since only a few days remain of the sixtieth session, we will, I hope, at the end of this meeting decide to revert to the Secretary-General's report and the recommendations contained therein during the sixty-first session. I have already discussed the importance of that matter with my successor.

I now give the floor to Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown, who will introduce the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress report on the prevention of armed conflict".

The Deputy Secretary-General: Let me first, if I may, read out a statement from the Secretary-General.

> "I very much regret that I cannot be with you today. I was looking forward to this occasion, and I am particularly grateful to President Eliasson for organizing today's debate. As you know, one of my consistent objectives as Secretary-General has been to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. This, after all, is what is implied by the very first words that our founders used to express their purpose in founding the Organization — 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.
>
> "In the first year of my tenure, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, chaired by my dear friend David Hamburg and the late, much lamented Cyrus Vance, inspired us all with its groundbreaking report. Since then, encouraged by the General Assembly and the Security Council, we in the Secretariat have sought to build on the Commission's work. I submitted my first report on the subject in 2001 and an interim one in 2003, and now I am pleased to submit the latest progress report, a main finding of which is that a culture of prevention is indeed beginning to take hold at the United Nations. Indeed, in many parts of the world we are working to resolve disputes peacefully, and we are seeking more and more to build a preventive approach into other aspects of our work, notably those concerned with economic and social development.
>
> "The Deputy Secretary-General will tell you a bit more about the report in his own words. But I hope very much that you will read it for yourselves and that with your help my successor will be able to strengthen this vital aspect of the Organization's work.
>
> "Meanwhile, I trust you will forgive my absence, since the object of my current mission is, precisely, to prevent further armed conflict in a region of the world which, during the lifetime of the United Nations, has suffered from it more than most. I look forward to hearing the conclusions of your debate on my return."

Now let me, following the remarks of the Secretary-General that I have just read out for him, offer some further comments of my own, as he suggested I would.

I think that perhaps the most striking recommendation of the report comes in paragraph 118, which is the proposal that, were we to dedicate just 2 per cent of the amount that we spend today on peacekeeping, we would with that $100 million be in a position to buy a lot of prevention. What buys a little peace prospectively has the real possibility of preventing one or more major wars in a year.

Everyone agrees that prevention is better, and also far more economical, than cure. Indeed, the latter point is perhaps even more obvious in the case of armed conflict than in that of disease, given the disastrous economic effects of conflict and the high cost of peacebuilding and reconstruction.

If prevention is so cheap, why are people so reluctant to invest in it? The answer, of course, is that the utility of any given prevention strategy is very difficult to prove. The need for it can always be questioned until it has already failed, and its success is impossible to demonstrate. Wars that do not happen are not news, and it is always possible that they would not have happened anyway, even if there had not been a prevention strategy.

Still, I think members will find, if they take the Secretary-General's to heart and read the report, that there are some pretty persuasive examples. One, mentioned in paragraph 58, is the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula. That is the sort of dispute that has been the trigger, if not the cause, of very serious conflicts in other parts of Africa and the world, but in this case the Secretary-General was able to use his good offices, bringing the Presidents of the two countries together for a series of meetings, to facilitate an agreement on how to implement the decision of the International Court of Justice, partly by setting up a Mixed Commission to identify and promote cross-border cooperation projects and joint economic ventures.

Another example is given in paragraph 56. Last year, the United Nations, working closely with other Member States and regional organizations, helped the

Government of Ecuador to defuse a political crisis by renewing the country's democratic institutions and building up the independence of State authorities, specifically the Supreme Court.

A third example has come to fruition since the report went to press. In Guyana, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme have been working together to help the people of the country to overcome long-standing social and political tensions. I hope that may have contributed in small part to last week's peaceful elections in that country.

Sadly, it is much easier to cite cases in which conflict was not prevented, but surely could have been if — and that is always a big "if" — the national authorities at the time had been willing to listen to advice. Too often, we spend vast sums of money to fight fires that, in hindsight, we might more easily have extinguished with timely preventive action. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, we are now in the throes of an almost impossible peacekeeping and peacemaking mission in a deeply divided country with a broken economy. That disaster could surely have been avoided if previous Ivorian Governments had been able to integrate, rather than exclude the workers of foreign origin who were contributing to the rapid economic growth of that time.

On the other hand, that example — the integration of migrant workers — also shows the challenge we face, because many of the allegedly most tried and true approaches to integration have, in Europe and elsewhere, been found wanting.

And so I come to what is perhaps most difficult about the area of prevention, and on which we look forward to the deliberations in the General Assembly of Governments and, tomorrow, of civil society representatives: advice on next steps.

Prevention remains an area of much promise but fewer answers. Therein lies the United Nations essential role: codifying, testing, promoting best practice, using our neutrality to build bridges and find new ways forwards, and doing so based on the collective wisdom of those here today and those we will hear from tomorrow.

The President: I am very glad to tell you, Mr. Deputy Secretary-General, that Mr. David Hamburg, whom you have mentioned, is in the Hall today. His work as Co-Chair, together with the late Cyrus Vance, of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict was seminal and of great importance for the direction of this debate. We are very glad to have him here, at the side of our friend Ibrahim Gambari, who carries the torch inside the United Nations on this matter.

I am glad the Deputy Secretary-General touched on some of the basic issues. What a qualitative difference we could have in the United Nations if we moved the focus from the late stages of conflict to its early stages, if we were to spend more time on smoke detection rather than taking care of a house that has already burned down.

The Deputy Secretary-General, with his background in the media world, knows how much effect the television cameras have. Sometimes, when I was Emergency Relief Coordinator, I asked myself slightly bitterly whether conflict existed if there were no pictures of it, and what happened when the cameras disappeared. Has anyone ever seen the headline in a newspaper: "A disaster did not occur"? Prevention is not rewarded to the extent needed. I am glad the Deputy Secretary-General put that issue clearly in front of us.

I have a list of 17 speakers, and there is another item on the agenda, from Azerbaijan and Armenia. I give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). As the report underlines, one of the chief obligations set forth in the Charter of the United Nations is the prevention of conflict. A clear message of the report is the progress of United Nations work towards a culture of prevention. The EU is pleased to note the strengthening of a culture of prevention across the Organization and vigorously supports the continuation of this trend. We understand

that, in order to further promote prevention of armed conflicts and their recurrence, the Member States of the United Nations should focus resources on strengthening the Organization's preventive mechanisms.

The European Union acknowledges the reported positive trend of the United Nations as regards increasing emphasis on prevention. We find the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) a very significant event, in which Member States reiterated their commitment to promote the culture of prevention of armed conflicts by effectively addressing the interconnected security and development challenges faced by peoples throughout the world, as well as to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to address the root causes of conflict in all possible ways. Reforms enhancing prevention include, inter alia, the newly established United Nations Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission's role in conflict prevention is potentially very valuable in supporting countries in post-conflict situation on the road towards sustainable peace and development and thus in helping to prevent the risk of the countries relapsing into conflict.

We believe that understanding the root causes of armed conflicts is the basis of conflict prevention. As rightly pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, we must both understand the origins of conflicts and seek to make violence a less reasonable option. Furthermore, in our preventive efforts we should not forget the underlying injustices and motivations that may have caused the conflict.

Understanding the link between development and security is clearly central to the discussion of preventing conflicts. By "security" we mean not only the lack of conflicts or physical violence, but also issues related to everyday life and basic needs. Fundamental things such as food security, health services, education, environmental security and legal possibilities to act on one's own behalf and to participate in decision-making are at the very core of the concept of human security.

Poverty is a root cause of insecurity and may lead to instability and conflict. We fully support the emphasis in the report stating that implementation of the Millennium Development Goals would serve to significantly reduce the overall sources of tension for developing countries that are vulnerable to conflict.

The international normative and institutional framework plays a key role in the prevention of armed conflicts. However, we should remember that it is not enough to establish international human rights, humanitarian and other relevant legal instruments. They also need to be understood and implemented fully and effectively. The report commends the work done in sensitizing different actors to the need to understand and apply these laws and rules. We find this kind of capacity-building highly valuable, and we have made it a regular part of the training of the military and civil components of the EU crisis management personnel.

The European Union is strongly committed to supporting the work of the International Criminal Court. The Court constitutes an important and credible preventive mechanism, as would-be perpetrators of human rights violations and war crimes must take into account the possibility of punishment following their actions.

In addition to approaches at the global level, we should emphasize regional initiatives to support the prevention of armed conflict.

The report explicitly underlines the primary responsibility of national Governments for the prevention of conflicts. We fully support this point of view. In this context, the EU reiterates its support for the Summit Outcome conclusion that each State has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The central responsibility rests within the countries themselves, and no external efforts as regards prevention will be of use unless the State and its population agree on their importance and have a will to address the issues in question.

Bad governance, corruption and lack or inadequate functioning of rule-of-law institutions are examples of problems that can lead to instability and conflict. Whereas the strengthening of national capacities to redress the problems is the duty of States, external actors can assist States to mitigate those potentially destabilizing factors by conflict-sensitive development assistance and promotion of good governance and human rights.

Furthermore, civil society is an important actor in preventing armed conflicts and their recurrence.

Governments should find ways to cooperate with non-governmental organizations, academics, religious leaders and other representatives of civil society in order to thoroughly understand and tackle injustices and underlying motivations causing instability and threats of conflict in a society.

The European Union highlights the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and underscores the importance of integrating a gender perspective into conflict prevention.

Children are a particularly vulnerable group in armed conflicts. The EU shares the concerns raised in the Secretary-General's report in this regard and stresses the importance of addressing the rights and protection of children in strategies for handling armed conflicts. The EU stresses the importance of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in the field of the prevention of conflicts. The Organization has a remarkable record in peacebuilding operations. It also has more competencies to promote conflict prevention than other organizations. The Secretary-General has himself many times successfully provided indispensable mediation in situations that risked escalating into conflict.

However, as the Secretary-General fairly states in his report, there are number of gaps in the United Nations system that are hampering work in the area of conflict prevention. We warmly welcome the efforts to strengthen coordination and coherence within the United Nations system, as well as those to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and other international organizations and relevant actors. There has been great progress in recent years in the area of tangible cooperation between the United Nations and the EU in crisis management areas. The EU recalls in particular the joint declaration on United Nations-European Union cooperation in the field of crisis management, which was signed in New York in September 2003. Further steps could be taken to enhance that cooperation.

In conclusion, we find the report's comprehensive approach to the prevention of conflict highly supportable. Preventing conflicts more effectively requires a better and more thorough understanding of the origins of conflicts. It also requires addressing the root causes of tension. The challenge is to ensure that due importance, including in terms of resources, is given to long-term conflict prevention activities rather than to responding to short-term crises. We should seek to enhance cooperation and coherence in our actions at all levels — from the global level to enhanced national capacities for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and engaging civil society actors — in order to promote conflict prevention and support peace.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by expressing our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for the clear vision reflected in his report on the prevention of armed conflict and on strengthening the work of international institutions in the area of peacebuilding (A/60/891). I would also like to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts by the Department of Political Affairs in preparing the report, which is to serve as one of the pillars to be relied upon in the endeavour to develop a clearer perspective regarding enhancing the capacity of the Organization to prevent the development of armed conflicts.

There is no doubt that the prevention of armed conflict continues to be one of the most important issues. It should receive great attention from the General Assembly and the Secretary-General so that it can be addressed as effectively as possible. That should take place in full respect for the Charter and while ensuring the required balance between the roles of each of the principal organs of the Organization in achieving the goals to which we aspire. That requires achieving widespread agreement in the General Assembly so that the United Nations can carry out its preventive role through the use of diplomacy. That proposal was put forth in 1995 by former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his *Agenda for Peace*.

In that regard, we agree with the report that the starting point should be to address the underlying causes of armed conflict at the early stages, thereby providing a real opportunity to prevent the development of such conflict. There are many issues at the national and international levels that require us to make greater efforts at the United Nations. In particular, those areas include the lack of sustainable development, the need to eliminate injustice, growing feelings of anxiety and desperation resulting from the failure to respect international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the lack of sufficient efforts by the United Nations to end the forceful occupation of foreign territory, and preventing discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion or other grounds.

We note that the report refers to the illicit trade in natural resources, the spread of HIV/AIDS and trafficking in illegal drugs as factors in armed conflicts. However, the report fails to mention foreign occupation as a source of armed conflict, although that issue was dealt with in resolution 57/337, which was the basis for the report. Paragraph 10 of the resolution clearly emphasizes the need to end foreign occupation as one of the important issues that must be addressed in the context of preventing conflict. Any future effort involving this or other reports should therefore take into account this crucial element in a way that leads to ending occupation.

History continues to prove that the source of violence in the Middle East region is Israel's continuing occupation of Palestinian territory, the Shab'a farms and the Golan Heights. Had it not been for such occupation we would not have experienced armed conflict in the region. Full withdrawal from Arab territories is the sole way to end resistance and limit armed conflict. That was the reason for the Arab League's launch of the initiative calling for strengthening the political track at the United Nations dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict, so as to achieve lasting and just peace as soon as possible. On the basis of the Arab initiative endorsed at the 2002 Beirut summit, the Arab States will continue to hold the United Nations — in particular the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General — responsible for the implementation of the peace process, along with the relevant parties and in the timeframe specified.

The report addresses the absence of a clear strategy to prevent the use of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons, the failure to reach agreement at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and the change in the position of nuclear States resulting from the change in security concepts. All these issues require further study and work to minimize the chances of armed conflict and to prevent the NPT from collapsing.

The report welcomes Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), but it does not deal with strengthening the United Nations, especially the General Assembly, to deal with disarmament issues in addition to non-proliferation issues. In that connection, it is important to recall that the base on which the NPT was established is the obligation of nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and that of non-nuclear weapon States not to produce them. Despite changes in military doctrine, that provision remains the base. If it is not respected, we will face the danger of the collapse of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Against that backdrop, we must conclude today with a clear message that nuclear-weapon States have major responsibilities under the Treaty. Those responsibilities were reiterated in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Nuclear-weapon States also have a responsibility to work towards the universality of the Treaty. That will not be achieved by convincing States outside the Treaty that have acquired nuclear weapons to become parties to the Treaty, but by establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. That will require all States in the region to adhere to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

In order to succeed in efforts to limit the outbreak of armed conflict, a clearer approach is required concerning the mandates of the main organs of the United Nations. That approach, which should aim at ending the Security Council's encroachment upon the General Assembly's mandate, calls for a distinction to be made between prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes once they arise, on the one hand, and, on the other, the enforcement measures taken by the Security Council as a last measure to deal with conflicts once they erupt. It also requires assessing the value of the debates that take place in the Security Council — including those on women and armed conflict and children and armed conflict, which have been discussed at times when the Council seemed incapable of taking any action to put an end to the hostilities in Lebanon. We should have a vision for carrying out the concepts debated in the Council on the basis that the Assembly, as the main democratic body of the Organization, should address conflict situations in cases where the Council has, for whatever reason, failed to deal with them.

In that context, we should also consider an adequate way to assign the Secretary-General responsibilities in the area of preventive diplomacy to avoid the development of armed conflicts. That should include mediation and good offices, which should be considered as a main pillar complementing the efforts of the General Assembly.

We should also deal clearly with attempts to mix the global initiative against terrorism and the peaceful settlement of disputes and ending situations of occupation. That also entails not using sanctions before the outbreak of conflict and where there is no Security Council mandate in that matter. That also requires us to stand firm before attempts to create a role for sanctions committees in dealing with terrorism at a time when we have not yet agreed on a comprehensive convention or strategy to combat terrorism. We do not see any reason to confuse the preventive role of the United Nations with terrorism, as they are both absolutely different from one another.

Although we very much believe that respect for human rights and the spread of democracy are inherent parts of the effort to prevent the development of armed conflict, we nevertheless maintain that, in dealing with human rights, the cultural, religious and ethnic specificities that distinguish one region from another should be taken into account. Their basis should be democracy and good governance, both internally and in relations between countries and in international organizations.

There is no doubt that regional organizations can play an important role in the prevention of armed conflict, given their understanding of geographical complexities and their awareness of the best ways to prevent conflicts before they break out. The General Assembly and the Secretary-General should seek to draw the best advantage from those capacities, especially in the areas of early warning and an effective approach to conflict prevention. Effective cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations could help them attain their common goals through the General Assembly. In that connection, we support the allocation to the Assembly of 2 per cent of the annual peacekeeping budget, to enhance and intensify such cooperation and other activities in this field.

It is time for the General Assembly to study the possibility of establishing a new commission, similar to the Peacebuilding Commission, to be called the Commission on the Prevention of Armed Conflict. It would have a new mandate and its own mechanisms. It would focus on coordinating with the Secretary-General on issues relating to the prevention of armed conflict and strengthening the powers of both the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to deal with disputes before they escalate into armed conflict.

Mrs. Ferrari (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): As a small, peace-loving State situated in the Caribbean zone of peace and security, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to make some brief remarks on agenda item 12, entitled "Prevention of armed conflict".

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/891), which contains some useful lessons and valuable insights and recommendations from the perspective of the United Nations and a wide range of actors working on the prevention of armed conflict.

One of the core principles of the United Nations, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter, is the maintenance of peace and security — which, obviously, includes the prevention of armed conflict. Chapter VI of the Charter, entitled "Pacific Settlement of Disputes", encourages any Member State to bring any dispute to the attention of the Security Council or the General Assembly.

Those founding principles place a duty on the United Nations to maintain regional peace and security the world over. My delegation wishes to bring to the attention of the General Assembly a simmering dispute between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan that, in our view, poses a significant danger to international peace and security. The sobering facts are as follows.

In March 2004, the National Congress of the People's Republic of China enacted legislation — the so-called anti-secession law — that sought to legalize and legitimize military force to settle the dispute between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Article 8 of the law states, inter alia, that

> "in the event that the Taiwan independence secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China, or that major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, the State shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

That law not only violates the United Nations Charter's principle of the peaceful resolution of disputes, but also threatens the security of the 23 million people of Taiwan. In addition to passing laws

aimed at legalizing armed aggression and continuing to build up its military might, senior officials in the Chinese Government and the People's Liberation Army have increased their threatening and bellicose rhetoric.

The annual report to Congress on the military power of the People Republic of China by the United States Department of Defense in July 2005 contained the following statement on pages 4 and 5:

> "China has deployed some 650 to 730 mobile CSS-6 and CSS-7 short-range ballistic missiles to garrisons opposite Taiwan. Deployment of these systems is increasing at a rate of about 100 missiles per year. ... China has 375,000 ground forces personnel deployed to the three military regions opposite Taiwan. China has been upgrading these units with amphibious armor and other vehicles, such as tanks and armored personnel carriers."

The People's Republic of China is a permanent member of the Security Council, the United Nations organ upon which the Charter confers the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As such it is important for China not to act in a way that is inconsistent with the grave responsibilities placed on members of the Council.

In the opinion of my Government, it is essential for the United Nations to treat this matter seriously and to take the necessary measures to prevent itself from being seen as acquiescing to, or even approving, this conduct by the People's Republic of China, which clearly violates the Charter of the United Nations.

In the recent past, the Security Council has been guilty of inaction when there were clear and obvious threats to humanity. It is our sincere hope that its unwillingness to become engaged in this case does not lead to armed conflict and ultimate tragedy for the people of the region.

It is incumbent upon the Member States of the United Nations to use imagination and diplomacy, and to be the catalysts that promote constructive dialogue and friendly engagement so that the Taiwan situation can be resolved in a peaceful, just and equitable way, to the benefit of the entire region.

The Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have great admiration for the Chinese civilization on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. It is our fervent hope that this matter can be settled quickly and peacefully, to the mutual benefit and satisfaction of both parties and in a way that will ensure the lasting peace and security of the region now and in the future.

Mr. Obando (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the second report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). We feel this is a very important issue for the international community, for four reasons.

First, it is intrinsic to one of the central elements of the Organization: international peace and security. Second, it means that the United Nations can continue to strengthen its emphasis on this issue, which requires the coordination of various approaches based on security, development and the defence of human rights. Third, this issue allows us to tackle in greater depth not only the responsibility to protect, but also one of its components: the responsibility to prevent. Fourth, examining this issue will help us to avoid the death of millions of people and the generation on a large scale of vulnerable populations such as displaced persons, refugees, the disabled, sexually exploited women and children, child soldiers and, in the long run, more poor people, who are those who suffer most from the consequences of conflict.

With that background, I will concentrate on four themes: first, the usefulness of a systemic approach in the analysis of prevention; second, the importance of a socio-economic dimension in conflict prevention; third, Peru's position with regard to preventive mechanisms that should be adopted by various actors in the international community; and fourth, conflict and the degradation of the environment.

With regard to the first point, Peru is happy to see that the Secretary-General, in his latest report, is using the same systemic approach to the prevention of conflict. In our opinion, that reflects reality in a context of increasing globalization, and it allows one to stress the great weight and international dimension of armed conflict. In other words, it means a comprehensive approach to transnational issues such as governance, unequal distribution of wealth, availability of food, et cetera.

On the second point, there is a multiplicity of factors linked to prevention. The socio-economic variable is usually the principal cause of most conflicts; therefore that is the one to which we need to devote more attention. That it is a cause has been

demonstrated in numerous studies on recent conflicts. In general, the other variables emerge and become significant only when the economic dimension has experienced some serious repercussion. Thus there are ethnically heterogeneous societies that can live peacefully in an economic equilibrium, but those differences can become evident and grow to the point that they create conditions that will provoke conflict when the people of a country or countries cannot satisfy their basic needs. However, it is also possible to find homogeneous societies involved in violent conflict because of poverty or social exclusion.

In other words, when one finds extreme poverty and a collapsed economic system, ethnic, religious or other types of differences could become acute and be transformed into banners for violence — even though they may not be the root origins of conflict. The same happens when a State cannot provide its people with minimal, basic public services in education, health, security, infrastructure, full control of its territory or adequate administration of its natural resources, or when the State cannot pay its public servants, the police or the army in particular. From that point of view, as the World Bank has observed, countries that are at the lowest level of human development are those that are chiefly exposed to conflict.

Thirdly, I wish to refer to preventive mechanisms that should be adopted by the various actors of the international community. In spite of the efforts made to implement peacekeeping operations, in all cases we need to decide on strategies that are more comprehensive, strategies that would include — apart from the institutional reconstruction that would be the foundation for governance and later for holding elections — measures that seek stability and long-term economic sustainability. In that way the Organization will be paying more attention to the causes of conflict than to the symptoms and will be more forward-looking than reactionary.

We consider that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is a very appropriate step in attending to the needs of the population of the countries most affected by armed violence, although Peru would have preferred that it also had a truly farsighted approach. However, it is not sufficient. We urgently need more aggressive mechanisms, such as writing off, totally or partially, some of the foreign debt, the provision of tariff concessions or para-tariff concessions, events that will attract foreign investment, training for young people, greater transfer of technology and the affirmation on the part of international financial agencies to improve public services and infrastructure.

Although it is not part of the Organization, the example of the Global Compact for Afghanistan, which was drawn up successfully, is an example of a more comprehensive strategy that we should think about. As we know, within that framework the international community — with the participation of States, international cooperation organizations and civil society — is providing predictable resources within certain specific time periods in order to carry out objectives, decided in accordance with national priorities, to improve the domestic economy and involve the global economy through the export of goods and services with greater aggregate value. It must be pointed out that private enterprise must seriously commit itself to participate in the process of reconstruction.

That approach should not simply replicate the primary economy but seek to create a new, modern and competitive economy. It should be followed by the international financial institutions that so far have concentrated more on economic adjustment rather than on modernizing dysfunctional, backward economies so that they can compete in the global economy.

What has been discussed is just the principal component of a comprehensive task to effectively prevent armed conflicts. In addition, preventive diplomacy, mediation and other forms of peaceful dispute settlement must be supported. Likewise, in accordance with a given context, we need to implement measures to strengthen the political institutions and tackle the humanitarian problem and the trade in small arms and light weapons, among other considerations. We ought to make more effective the mechanisms for political dialogue, the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for peace education, promotion of the rule of law and human rights, strengthening State institutions and the reform of the security sector. Peru is convinced that participation and leadership of the authorities and civil society of each country are necessary, as is the participation of regional organizations.

We should add the importance of the United Nations taking a more comprehensive, prevention-based approach — through an early warning system for

conflicts and focusing on the root causes — that would enable the Organization to urgently design a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention. We also need to discuss mechanisms to overcome the short attention span of the public and the communications media with regard to conflicts, mechanisms that would attract more action on the part of the various international actors with regard to prevention.

United Nations bodies tend to pay attention to conflicts only when they have already become a reality; only then do they set in motion the multilateral mechanisms set out in Chapter VI of the Charter. That is why it is imperative that the early warning system just mentioned should provoke an immediate response in the Organization, in order to implement the powers in Chapter VI or, depending on the occasion, to establish closer cooperation with regional arrangements, as established in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

As the fourth and last point, I refer to scenarios that enable us to discern potential causes of conflict. One is the degradation of the environment, which has increased the destructive potential of natural disasters and has, in some cases, unleashed them. The issue of scarce resources such as water must also be considered.

Peru is an extremely diverse country with a geography that goes from the sea to the semiarid coast to the Andes and the Amazon basin. We are very concerned at this prognosis, which is based on studies that need to be further researched and deepened, rather than hidden and distorted. The report of the high-level panel of 2004 referred to environmental degradation and the destructive effects of disasters as a threat to global security. Therefore we should continue to implement a strategic and shared vision of sustainable development in which its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — are adequately considered.

Finally, as one of the components of a larger process, Peru would like to suggest progressive consolidation of a data base administered by the United Nations, through which the Organization, regional organizations, States, local governments and civil society can share with the international community their successful experiences in strengthening institutions and programmes for local development within the framework of the prevention of armed conflict.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/60/891 on the prevention of armed conflicts. We are convinced of the need to strengthen the collective capacity of the United Nations for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

We have taken note of the relevant recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, which we will examine to discuss and consider during the upcoming session. Nevertheless, we would not want to conclude the sixtieth session by giving the impression that the lack of discussion in the General Assembly indicates that we are indifferent to the matter. On the contrary, through this brief statement we wish to affirm that Guatemala, as a post-conflict country, is mindful of the importance of promoting a culture of peace, and for that reason we highlight the urgent need for mechanisms to prevent conflicts. Furthermore, we stress that we have great experience in this area that has helped us to shape our multifaceted peace process.

If there is one thing we have learned through dialogue and the exchange of experiences, it is that the reduction of risk and preventive attention to conflicts and breaches of the peace are the best way of mitigating, if not avoiding, irreparable and irreversible damage. Although we have made significant progress, Guatemalan society, 10 years after the signing of the peace accords, is still not totally reconciled. We still need to lay the foundations of a more participatory and equitable society, create development opportunities for all, and rebuild the social fabric of our country. We have therefore embarked on a complex process of acknowledging the responsibilities of all the parties to the conflict, initiated reparation and retribution systems, and allowed for the elucidation of the truth of past occurrences, all with the view to opening a window of opportunity for economic growth and sustainable development within the framework of a multicultural society based on a democratic and inclusive system.

We believe that the culture of prevention is consistent with Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, which is of a preventive nature insofar as it calls in its first paragraph for effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for bringing about by peaceful means the settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.

With all due respect, Sir, we would argue with your characterization of Article 33 of the Charter as poetry. On the contrary, many conflicts have been prevented or disrupted precisely by means of the tools prescribed therein, a fact that is rarely acknowledged.

We also believe that the subject of conflict prevention must be approached from the perspective of the full safeguard of the rule of law, a concept that is key to the legitimacy of every democratic State that guarantees and respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons. In that sense, we emphasize the importance in all conflict prevention of promoting dialogue mechanisms with all stakeholders. We also acknowledge the valuable contributions of civil society, religions and the private sector. In Guatemala, the experience of holding open dialogues has already borne much fruit, the latest of which is a national agreement on a rural development policy. In that regard, the selection of themes for the holding of such dialogues is essential. We feel that it is a prerogative of each society to safeguard the right to establish its own priorities and identify its particular needs, reflecting its natural and intrinsic uniqueness.

We agree that it is important to act with determination and resolution in our efforts to strengthen the preventive capacities of the Organization, while ensuring that our activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

We encourage the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to pursue its valuable work in conflict prevention, and stress the importance of cooperation among the various bodies of the United Nations system, in particular through the joint programme of the UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs on building countries' institutional and individual capacities in conflict settlement, from which Guatemala and other countries of our region have benefited. Such cooperation has proven useful and effective for Member States.

Finally, allow me to take advantage of what will very probably be my delegation's last opportunity to thank you personally and publicly, Sir, for the magnificent effort you have put into our work this session, which we are now preparing to conclude. We will remember your dedication, commitment and strength, as well those of your staff. We are also grateful for your efforts at this important session that gave rise to the Peacebuilding Commission and to the Human Rights Council, both valuable instruments at the service of humanity.

The President: If we have had successes, it is because of teamwork. We are in this together. The word "together" is much more powerful than the word "alone".

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): First, let me congratulate the Secretary-General on his comprehensive and most instructive report on progress made by the United Nations in the prevention of armed conflict. My delegation concurs with the analysis of the factors that give rise to conflict and with the responses required to identify and contain them. Of course, conflict prevention is the raison d'être of the Organization, and at the centre of our mandate is the promotion of non-violent ways of resolving them. Alas, although we have come some way in strengthening our capacity to prevent conflicts before they erupt, we still have to "move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention", as the report so rightly states. From our experiences in Africa, we know that if the United Nations steps early into the fray, there is always a very good chance for a speedy resolution.

We support the view that it should be the responsibility of the United Nations to intervene to prevent the eruption of conflicts, regardless of whether they are within or between States. In many parts of Africa, the conditions of poverty and deprivation are so dire as to constitute obvious triggers of violent civil unrest. Negligent, unresponsive Governments, for which the development account is marginal in their scale of priorities, should be accosted in the same manner as those that openly threaten their neighbours militarily. Development policies — or rather their lack — that have the potential to provoke violent upheavals are as dangerous to global peace as are polices that amount to warmongering.

We in Africa have witnessed the many instances when feelings of hopelessness, marginalization and despair have induced thousands of young, mostly unemployed men and women to take up arms against established authority. The devastation that has ensued in each and every case has been enormous in economic, social and humanitarian terms. The United Nations must develop its capacity to engage Governments that are seen to be unresponsive to the

development needs of their people or whose policies lead to the impoverishment and destitution of their people. We do agree that implementing the Millennium Development Goals would go a long way towards removing the socio-economic triggers of conflict in African countries. We support the United Nations/World Bank Youth Employment Network and hope that it will not turn out to be another empty talk shop. Creating employment opportunities for Africa's youth is a very urgent conflict prevention requirement. We therefore look to the Network for early results.

Tensions between States that emanate from prejudice and misunderstanding between civilizations need our urgent attention, especially with the present occurrences in today's world. My delegation agrees that the United Nations should do more to help reduce those tensions and to promote dialogue and understanding between the world's civilizations. The problems in the Middle East and Afghanistan, as well as the growing phenomenon of terrorism, all attest to the need for the international system to take up that mantle with great urgency. In that regard, the work of bodies such as the Alliance of Civilizations is highly commendable.

We note with regret that, in spite of the tremendous will on the part of the Secretariat to do more, resource constraints are limiting our ability to undertake more conflict-prevention activities. We are more willing to engage in very costly firefighting than in relatively inexpensive fire prevention. We therefore strongly support the Secretary-General in his call for at least 2 per cent of the annual peacekeeping budget to be allocated to prevention activities on a predictable and secure basis.

I cannot in good conscience conclude this statement without referring to a very serious omission in the report: the deteriorating security situation across the Taiwan Strait. It is unfortunate that none other than the People's Republic of China, a respected member of the Security Council — which is the custodian of international peace and security — is itself threatening international peace and security by expanding its already huge military arsenal in readiness for an invasion of Taiwan. Every year for the past several years, China has trained about 100 additional missiles on Taiwan, reaching a total of 800 missiles this year. China's military budget has been growing at double-digit rates every year for the past 10 years. And China has openly stated that it is prepared to settle the Taiwan question through "non-peaceful means and other necessary measures". Not only has Taiwan been openly threatened, but so have important Members of the Organization.

Many expert reviews of the situation in the Taiwan Strait have concluded that it is perhaps the world's most dangerous threat to international peace and security. Last year, James Hoge, Editor of the journal *Foreign Affairs*, observed that

> "the flashpoints for hostilities — Taiwan, the Korean peninsula and divided Kashmir — have defied peaceful resolution. Any of them could explode into large-scale warfare that would make the current Middle East confrontations seem like police operations."

Last year, tensions escalated further when China passed its anti-secession law, which virtually declared war on Taiwan. Taiwan reacted by terminating the functioning of the National Unification Council and the application of the National Unification Guidelines. The situation has since continued to deteriorate further. It is becoming more and more serious and calls for our urgent attention.

Some may argue that the issue of the Taiwan Strait is an internal matter for China to resolve. Others view it as a situation involving two sovereign States. Whatever the case, it is a matter that falls squarely within the mandate of the Security Council and should be treated as such. After all, we have rightly responded in the cases of Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other internal-conflict situations, whether active or latent.

My delegation therefore strongly urges the Secretary-General to undertake the necessary operational and other actions, in accordance with Article 33 of Chapter VI of the Charter, to begin a process of mediation between the two parties and to report to the General Assembly at our next session on progress made.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes the report on the prevention of armed conflict presented to us today (A/60/891). It provides a clear and structured account of preventive measures, as well as a comprehensive inventory of what the United Nations is doing in this area.

It is encouraging to note that the expertise of the Organization in the various areas relating to conflict

prevention has improved in recent years and that its activities have intensified. However, the review of the capacity of the United Nations system in the area of conflict prevention shows that the various actions undertaken could be better coordinated. The specific contribution of each stakeholder to those efforts should be recognized with a view to enhancing coherence and eliminating any duplication within the United Nations system.

An examination of all ongoing conflicts in the world shows that international efforts to prevent conflict, and the capacity of the United Nations in this area, must be reinforced. When post-conflict situations have reignited after years of ceasefire, as has occurred recently in a number of countries, prevention has clearly been shown to be deficient.

Thus far, our debates have focused too much on the cessation of hostilities and not enough on the internal and external factors that contribute to the outbreak of conflict — to say nothing of the human suffering and social, economic and environmental consequences of conflict. However, it is acknowledged that investing in prevention is, generally speaking, more effective and beneficial.

The report is therefore timely. We welcome the fact that there will be a debate — which we hope will be constructive — on conflict prevention during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. That debate should make it possible to further strengthen the commitment of the United Nations and the international community in this field, which is central to the Charter.

It is very important that civil society participate fully in this debate. We must not underestimate the role and responsibilities of representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic research and the media in that area.

Conflict prevention is a priority of our foreign policy. I can assure you, Mr. President, that Switzerland will play an active and substantial part in the forthcoming debate. We are ready to continue the discussion, together with States that share the same vision, by making concrete proposals to ensure that the recommendations of the Secretary-General are implemented.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): The delegation of Tuvalu wishes first of all to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion on agenda item 12, "Prevention of armed conflict". We wish to commend the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the very informative and instructive progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). We welcome the findings and recommendations of the report, particularly with regard to building a culture of prevention of armed conflict.

A primary function of the United Nations enshrined in Article 1 of the Charter is to maintain international peace and security and to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

In particular for small, peaceful and far-flung States such as Tuvalu and for isolated regions such as the Pacific, such a role is crucial, as we all know that international political stability is fundamental to the sustainable development and survival of all States, but in particular small States. The devastation and losses that we have seen resulting from armed conflict in all regions of the world have once again underscored the significant importance of such a role. More important, they require effective prevention measures that are comprehensive and realistic in all regions of the world.

It has to be acknowledged that since its founding, as clearly reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, the United Nations, through the General Assembly and the Security Council, has successfully prevented or resolved several deadly conflicts in the world. For that, it is to be highly commended. It must also be noted that, despite those achievements, the current and looming tensions in East Asia — fuelled in particular by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on the Korean peninsula and by the threat of the use of military force in the Taiwan Strait — are a real threat to the stability and security not only of the region, but also of the rest of the world.

My delegation strongly feels that the international community must not turn a blind eye to these tensions. The recent swift action of the Security Council with regard to the ballistic missile tests on the Korean peninsula must serve as an example of how the international community should act in the event of a threat to international peace and security. Likewise, the United Nations must pay particular attention to the ongoing dispute involving the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, as it has the real potential to lead to

military confrontation if it is not dealt with effectively and efficiently.

My delegation is on record as drawing the attention of the United Nations membership to these real threats, in particular the military intimidation exerted through the deployment in China of 800 ballistic missiles aimed at Taiwan and through China's enactment of the so-called anti-secession law. The irony of the situation is the fact that there is no effective political mechanism in place to oversee peaceful and preventive measures to resolve this dispute, despite the active involvement of the 23 million people of Taiwan in international cooperation. Surely, the United Nations cannot fail to shoulder its collective responsibility with regard to world peace by ignoring that threat.

We strongly feel that these acts of intimidation against Taiwan not only run counter to provisions of the United Nations Charter, but also contradict international commitments on peace and security, including the leaders' outcome document (resolution 60/1) adopted by this House last year. The United Nations must step in and ensure peaceful dialogue.

We believe that in honouring the leaders' call for collective security and effective prevention, there is clearly a role for the United Nations to proactively promote trust, confidence and peaceful dialogue between the stakeholders. This threat is real for the North-East Asia-Pacific region and for the whole world. We call for urgent preventive action by the United Nations regarding the Taiwan Strait for the sake of all.

Ms. Kania (Germany): I would like to fully associate Germany with the statement just delivered by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

As a country with a particular interest in the issue of conflict prevention, Germany warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's recent report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). The international community continues to face numerous challenges that make conflict prevention more important than ever. A comprehensive approach to conflict prevention is therefore essential. The United Nations needs to play a key role in further developing this issue. States Members of the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to conflict prevention in last year's World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

Germany agrees with the Secretary-General that in order to prevent armed conflicts, we must understand their origins and must seek to make violence a less reasonable option. That responsibility rests primarily with individual States, which need to strengthen their national capacities to address structural risk factors. National dialogue and consensus-building processes are important in that regard. But States are not alone in this: external support, including from the United Nations, is available in areas such as democracy-building, elections and constitutional capacity-building. Regional organizations also have an important role to play.

Peace, security, development, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are closely intertwined. Implementing the Millennium Development Goals will contribute to reducing the overall sources of tension in developing countries that are vulnerable to conflict; so will further developing and implementing a stronger international normative and institutional framework.

In that context, Germany read with interest the Secretary-General's suggestion that a "responsibility to prevent" be developed in parallel to the responsibility to protect, to which world leaders committed themselves in the 2005 outcome document. Like many other Governments, the German Federal Government supported the international conference of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict that took place here in New York in September 2005, bringing together representatives of civil society from more than 110 countries. Civil society has an important role to play in the prevention of armed conflict. We fully support the Secretary-General's call for an intensification of the dialogue with civil society.

The Secretary-General's report has highlighted once again that the issue of conflict prevention remains very important. Together with other Member States, we stand ready to cooperate so that we can further develop a culture of prevention not only within the United Nations system, but in general. In that context, the suggestions put forward by the Secretary-General deserve careful consideration.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891), for which we commend him. The report is comprehensive and

informative, as it presents the strengths of the Organization's system as well as its gaps and identifies the responsibilities of States.

As stated in the report, the prevention of armed conflict remains the chief responsibility of the Organization. My delegation's intervention is aimed at contributing to the discussion called for by the Secretary-General to strengthen our resolve in the maintenance of international peace. Solomon Islands would like to make general remarks on the report before discussing selected issues.

With regard to the issue of the causes of conflict, Solomon Islands believes that many of what are identified in the report as systematic root causes of conflict — such as the small-arms trade, weak governance, poor public policies, inadequate health services and so forth — are secondary causes of conflict. The primary cause of conflict is related to development; it is the fact that the world is divided between the haves and the have-nots.

It is the countries that are located on the periphery of the international system, in particular the least developed countries, that are the most vulnerable to security threats. Those countries continue to face challenges in participating fully in a globalized world. Good governance, proper health systems and better education all cost money. My delegation agrees with the argument made in the report that the primary responsibility rests with sovereign States. But States can help themselves only if there is a global concerted effort to create a just and fair economic system. The suspension of the Doha round does additional harm and maintains the structural divide between the North and the South.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Solomon Islands welcomes the various international mechanisms that are available to assist countries — especially those emerging from conflict — in particular the Peacebuilding Commission, set up to help countries emerging from conflict not to slip back into conflict. Solomon Islands looks forward to the Commission's recommendations on the issue, as called for by the Secretary-General, and to the utilization of funds, in particular the Democracy Fund, to strengthen governance and bring our political systems closer to our respective peoples.

On the issue of HIV/AIDS, Solomon Islands would like to see the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria provide for threats both big and small, for all threats start out small. In our case, smallness is a curse, meaning that minimum attention is given, allowing threats to grow in size and scope. We must avoid that and invest in preventing all threats from growing.

Sadly, Pacific regional proposals have not been considered, although submissions were made by our regional intergovernmental organization, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. My delegation hopes that the responsible authorities could reconsider the proposal in the light of the Secretary-General's report.

My delegation is also concerned at the fact that some threats have not received any attention by our Organization. The increased threat within the East Asian region, in particular with respect to the Taiwan straits, has been brought to the attention of our institution by Member States. Unfortunately, there is, as of now, no regional or international mechanism capable of keeping the threat in check.

In that regard, Solomon Islands supports the proposal contained in the report that the General Assembly debate such threats. The goal is not only to assist the various United Nations departments in analysing the levels of the threats posed, but also to put such threats in their proper perspective, allowing the Secretary-General's Office to receive firsthand information and engage Governments and stakeholders in the process, as well as encouraging Member States to live up to their Charter obligations in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Solomon Islands hopes also that the working methods of the Security Council and the proposed enlargement of the Council will be given equal attention, considering that the Council is the principal organ charged with the responsibility of maintaining international peace.

Finally, my delegation would like to close by once again welcoming the report and its contents and by assuring Mr. Eliasson of Solomon Islands' commitment and support in positively contributing towards making the world safer and free from structural threats.

Mr. Chem (Cambodia): I would like to express my sincere appreciation to President Eliasson for having convened this significant plenary meeting to adopt a short procedural draft resolution taking note of the Secretary-General's progress report (A/60/891) on the prevention of armed conflict, so that the report, containing strategic proposals and recommendations of the Secretary-General, can be taken up for lively discussion at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

My delegation highly values the painstaking efforts made by the Secretary-General in formulating this significant report, which is the result of broad consultations with United Nations agencies and all actors working on the prevention of armed conflict and which contains a careful analysis of the information collected. Primarily, my delegation finds that the general analysis section — particularly concerning sources of conflict and the enhancement of an infrastructure for peace, among other things — though not comprehensive in nature, gives us better insight into the coordination among, and commitments of, individual Member States to work more effectively for conflict prevention with the relevant country-based United Nations agencies. My delegation also is convinced that genuine national political will and regional cooperation will help us reach our common goals.

Cambodia, as a country which has emerged from a long period of conflict, war and genocide, takes this opportunity to extend its deep gratitude to the international community and to the United Nations for their consistent and generous efforts to put the country back on the path of political stability, security, sustainable development and peace to the country, thus preventing an undesirable relapse into conflict.

My delegation fully favours the adoption of the short procedural draft resolution initiated by the President, and I am quite confident that the draft resolution will secure consensus on the part of all States Members of the United Nations.

My delegation finds the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General very useful and will forward them to the capital for study, especially with regard to sections on financial implications. In addition, my delegation believes that those recommendations should be put forward for active discussion at the forthcoming sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General that there has been a gap between rhetoric and reality. Admittedly, the performance of the United Nations has so far not been satisfactory to Member States in terms of the efforts made to avert the armed conflicts which we have seen in the context of the current developments unfolding in different parts of the world, in which a large number of people, both civilians and military personnel, have been killed.

My delegation is very pleased with this week's compromise, arrived at by Member States in the ad hoc Working Group, concerning the adoption of the report and of the draft resolution on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which will be recommended to the Assembly later on for adoption. The revitalization of the General Assembly will definitely help enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in discharging its duty to safeguard international peace and security.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): May I commend Mr. Eliasson for having organized this meeting to discuss the report of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on the prevention of armed conflict. I wish also warmly to salute the Secretary-General for an excellent report. The report comes at a most auspicious time. It adds to the many personal and tireless efforts made by the Secretary-General to bring peace to troubled parts of the world.

The report shows a clear understanding of what needs to be done at different levels — namely, the national, regional, and international levels — to address challenges in the area of peace and security.

At the national level, we need now more than ever to embrace, in word and in action, the principles of transparency and inclusiveness in governance. Nigeria believes that this would help to promote confidence among populations and the support of the international community. Our goal of eliminating poverty by providing gainful employment to the teeming youth population should remain the sheet anchor of national action. Furthermore, we have to overcome the scourge of pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, which constitute a deadly cocktail that threatens the productive sector of the economies of many developing countries, including those of Africa. More importantly, we need to put an

early end to existing armed conflicts for our nations to stabilize and to embark on meaningful development.

The African Union and other subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, have taken various initiatives to resolve current conflicts and prevent the outbreak of new ones. There is now permanent engagement by our countries with regard to such conflict situations through the African Union Peace and Security Council and comparable subregional mechanisms. These initiatives and efforts will continue to require the support and understanding of our partners. It is reassuring that the World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1) contains far-reaching decisions taken by world leaders on this matter. The need to faithfully implement those decisions cannot be overemphasized, in view of their impact on Africa's growth and development.

I would like to identify some key elements in that connection. Poverty has generally served as the fodder upon which most armed conflicts feed. The international community must show commitment in addressing the yearnings of the developing countries in connection with the issue of trade imbalances and youth unemployment. Various national programmes, such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy of the Nigerian Government, deserve continued support. As a home-grown programme, it answers to the peculiar needs and aspirations of the Nigerian people. The support of the international community would therefore create a positive attitude towards not just the national Government but also the United Nations.

HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases have proved to be a serious threat to the survival of most African economies. Sustained coordinated efforts by national Governments, the United Nations and specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF, as well as civil society, would be invaluable in that regard.

With regard to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, easy access to such weapons is a disincentive to dialogue in conflict situations and now represents a veritable scourge in Africa and most other parts of the developing world. Let us eschew the pursuit of national gains and commercial interests in order to address this major problem. Our past failures in reaching decisions should not discourage us from rising to the challenges posed by the spread of small arms and light weapons.

As for strengthening the institutions of governance, we should not let slip our commitment to the dispensation of justice, the conduct of free and fair elections and the efficient management of national resources. We believe that such actions would strengthen confidence in governance and reinforce the willingness of the population to defend democratic institutions. But we must, equally, move with vigour to replicate good governance in international bodies.

With regard to the settlement of existing disputes, as the example of Nigeria and Cameroon has amply demonstrated, the resolution of border disputes in an amicable manner can strengthen amity between nations and create an atmosphere conducive to stability and development. We do not underestimate the challenges this entails, but a demonstration of the requisite political will would enable those problems to be overcome.

Let me conclude by referring briefly to the most recent diplomatic shuttle of the Secretary-General in the Middle East. The success of the visit so far attests to the premium that our Organization should put on preventive measures. We commend the Secretary-General for those efforts, which should rekindle the confidence and trust of the peoples of the world in our Organization. That would be made even more evident when we invest, as we should, in this area to make our world a better place.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): My delegation would like to commend the President for having convened this meeting on such a crucial issue. We are hopeful that our discourse today will contribute to furthering our collective efforts to combat the scourge of armed conflict. While the overall trend in the number of armed conflicts worldwide may be downward, global upheavals and uncertainty are on the rise. It is the best of times for some, but it is the worst of times for others. The recent tragedy of Lebanon and the agonizing delay in the Security Council — at great cost to innocent men, women and children — in reaching an agreement for ending the hostilities once more reminds us of the imperative to strengthen the global norms that can bring about a real culture of respect for human life, mutual coexistence and peace.

The Secretary-General speaks for many when he says that there is an unacceptable gap between rhetoric

and reality. In view of the various deadly conflicts in recent history and the increased tensions between different parts of the world, it is critical that we come together and try to engage with each other with mutual respect and equality.

Indonesia believes that multilateralism should be at the heart of all our efforts in the prevention of conflicts at the intra-State level. Mutually beneficial international partnerships can have a significant influence on the peaceful resolution of difficult political and socio-economic problems. The Charter and the principles of international law should be our guides in that regard. Hence, the United Nations — our chief multilateral forum — should be the main forum in which to address this issue. The role of the United Nations needs to be strengthened, including though effective and timely interventions, so as to seek peaceful ways out of confrontational situations.

It is the prime responsibility of national Governments to adopt the strategies and plans that they consider to be most effective in ensuring that peace prevails in their countries. The United Nations and other relevant international entities should support the capacity-building of, in particular, those countries which are vulnerable to conflict.

My delegation broadly welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). We are pleased that a third, very important, sphere of action, namely, systemic prevention, has been introduced, after the concepts of structural and operational prevention were taken up in the 2001 report on the same topic (A/55/985). We believe that by focusing on actions at the systemic level, where all critical elements are addressed, the international community can be more effective in both formulating and implementing solutions that bring about lasting peace.

Indeed, concerted systemic measures, such as those to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms, tackle environmental degradation and foster corporate social responsibility, particularly in those industries that have been known to fuel conflict, can help to promote world peace. We regard progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals to be paramount in the elimination of the systemic inequities that, for many, have continued to be the major hurdle to their climbing out of poverty. Avenues such as trade based on a fair and equal international trading regime can lead to sustainable income-generation cycles, thereby improving the socio-economic conditions of the impoverished. The best way to prevent conflict is to take away the negative elements that may act as the incubator for conflict.

The concept of the responsibility to protect should be approached very carefully, taking into account the sovereignty and equality of all States. My delegation opposes the threatening of peoples, groups or countries by others, and sees that as a counterproductive measure. While we realize that sanctions may be required in some exceptional circumstances, we believe that extreme care should be exercised in that regard. We also believe that aid should not be tied to conditionalities. Effective partnerships for development are those that are based on mutual understanding, trust, respect and accountability among all parties.

Indonesia, as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, would like to work actively with others to try to fill the lacunae in the international peacebuilding system. We need to implement cohesive and integrated peacebuilding strategies that address conflict-related issues in their entirety.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm our full support for all those who endeavour to take concrete steps based on international principles of justice, dialogue and cooperation to resolve conflicts in a holistic manner, giving priority to removing the root causes of grievances.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me at the outset to congratulate the Secretary-General and his collaborators on the drafting of the report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891) before us at this meeting. That document meets a very deeply felt need in today's world, because prevention is one of the main obligations established in the Charter of the United Nations. The main responsibility for prevention rests with national Governments, particularly since it is always preferable to prevent a conflict than to lament its consequences later.

In his report the Secretary-General highlights the normative, political and institutional progress made in this area. Since 2001 — the date of his first report on this subject (A/55/985) — United Nations organs have adopted various resolutions, including Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) on strengthening the

effectiveness of the Council's role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. The report also indicates that if we are to prevent conflicts, we must understand their origins and seek to make violence a less acceptable option, and that we must not ignore the underlying injustices or motivations that cause people to take up arms. In addition, it maintains that violence finds followers when people lack alternatives and feel voiceless. That confronts us with the dual challenge of addressing or diminishing the tension that hovers over society and strengthening the institutions that give it the ability to channel conflict into non-violent paths and to open up spaces for dialogue.

The report reminds us of the distinction between structural and operational prevention and introduces systemic prevention, which refers to measures to address the global risk of conflict that transcends specific States. Various paragraphs and chapters concern the role of the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the international community in general in the area of conflict prevention. In various sections, specific examples are highlighted, such as systemic, structural and operational measures to neutralize sources of tension.

Some of the examples cited are in the region of the Americas, including the Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS), which establishes the basis for peaceful coexistence among democratic member States. Likewise, the report refers to Central American States' firm demonstration of their commitment to the rule of law and conflict prevention by utilizing the International Court of Justice to help resolve conflicts, particularly long-standing conflicts that could destabilize the subregion if they are not peacefully and systematically addressed.

Nicaragua is currently participating in three trials before the International Court of Justice, two of which concern the country's maritime borders. We must recall that the Court has jurisdiction over all issues submitted to it by States regarding prevention-related matters covered by the Charter of the United Nations or by treaties and conventions currently in force.

It is noteworthy that, in the portion dealing with flows of illegal narcotics, our Central American region is also mentioned as one of the areas that will continue to suffer from that evil because of a lack of concerted action at the global, regional and national levels. We believe that in this regard, the report errs by not highlighting the efforts being made in the inter-American region through OAS agreements and services, including the Inter-American Commission for Drug Abuse and Control, as part of the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration, and the implementation of the Constitutive Convention of the Permanent Central American Commission for the Eradication of the Illicit Production, Traffic, Consumption and Use of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In fact, in 2004 and 2005, in only one country of the subregion — my country, Nicaragua — the national police confiscated 13,500 kilos of cocaine, worth more than $225 million on the drug market.

Another omission that we have noted in the report is the failure to highlight the role of UNESCO in this area — particularly in the evaluative tables appearing at the end, in which it is mentioned only in the context of the fight against HIV/AIDS. Since the 1990s, UNESCO has sponsored various studies and seminars on this topic with so-called peace promoters in this region. Again, it is worth mentioning the role played by UNESCO in the area of conflict prevention, in accordance with resolution 53/243, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Before concluding, my delegation wishes to draw attention to the situation in East Asia, where two problems have been causing an increase in tension. One of them is on the Security Council's agenda, but the other is of equal or greater importance, because one of the countries involved possesses nuclear weapons and has hundreds of missiles aimed at another country in the Taiwan Strait. That could lead to a military confrontation of unimaginable proportions. This is not among the issues being considered by this world body. To my delegation, it is very worrisome that neither the United Nations nor the international community has taken preventive measures, which we believe are urgently needed because of the threat involved.

Mr. Ozawa (Japan): I join previous speakers in expressing appreciation to the Secretary-General for his progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). It has been five years since his first such report, in 2001, and three years since the adoption of resolution 57/337.

Our discussions today on the Secretary-General's report are quite timely as we continue to engage in the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome

(resolution 60/1). We note that the report analyzes structural and operational measures, as well as systemic measures, for conflict prevention. That analysis will no doubt help to deepen our further discussions on this matter and also shed light on future efforts that should be taken by Member States.

We feel that the concept of conflict prevention is now well established. It has been the guiding concept in our discussions on conflict and post-conflict situations and has led us to develop the concepts of peacebuilding and of the consolidation of peace. We feel that our commitment to promote a "culture of prevention", as outlined in the outcome document of the 2005 world summit, was an important accomplishment. At the same time, in order to be successful, we need to pursue practical and concrete measures which take into account the real requirements on the ground. Such measures, needless to say, require careful assessment of the peculiar characteristics of each conflict situation.

The Government of Japan has long advocated the need for a comprehensive approach to preventing conflict by incorporating political, economical, social and humanitarian measures. Japan considers the concept of conflict prevention as an important factor in achieving human security, which has been adopted as a key element of Japan's foreign and official development assistance policies.

An important element of Japan's comprehensive approach is its commitment to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. At the Asian-African Summit in April 2005, Prime Minister Koizumi pledged to double Japan's official development assistance to Africa over the next three years, and, at the Group of Eight (G-8) Gleneagles summit, held in July 2005, the Prime Minister announced Japan's intention to increase the volume of official development assistance in the next five years by $10 billion over the 2004 level. Japan has also been providing assistance for the consolidation of peace and nation-building in the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sri Lanka and a number of African countries.

The United Nations, as the only truly universal international Organization, plays a crucial role by enacting operational measures to prevent the escalation of conflict. As mentioned in the outcome document, the mediation capacity of the United Nations needs to be strengthened. The establishment of the Mediation Support Unit will enhance the role of the good offices of the Secretary-General and provide additional support for his mediation efforts.

At the same time, we must recognize the fact that regional organizations are playing increasingly important roles in the field of conflict prevention and mediation. It goes without saying that possible measures for action need to take into account the peculiar characteristics of each country and region. That being the case, the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations should cooperate and act in a complementary manner. A good example of such cooperation is the negotiation of the Darfur Peace Agreement. The African Union (AU), under the leadership of the presidents of the Republic of the Congo and of Nigeria, together with the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Konaré, played a critically important role in the negotiations. We commend the role played by the African Union.

In other regions, the mediation efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional organizations have also been beneficial and welcome. Those regional efforts, based on a sense of local ownership of the conflict-prevention process, deserve the support of the international community. The Security Council could complement such efforts through the dispatch of Security Council missions, the imposition of sanctions and other measures. For its part, Japan will continue to support such regional efforts through such measures as providing funding to the ECOWAS secretariat for dispatching ECOWAS mediators to Liberia.

It is said that about half of all armed conflicts relapse into violent conflict within five years of a peace agreement. It is clear that we must do more to prevent the recurrence of conflict. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission gives us some hope in that regard. We believe that the Peacebuilding Commission will benefit by gaining firsthand knowledge of what is happening on the ground. Such information could be provided by the United Nations field missions, regional organizations, donor communities and non-governmental organizations. That information, together with national plans based on ownership, will form the basis for identifying the

appropriate measures for achieving the sustainable consolidation of peace.

Finally, in view of the importance of this agenda item, my delegation expresses its support for the proposal to include it on the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. As there has been no substantive discussion of this matter for some time, we hope that our future discussions will be more action-oriented.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to have this opportunity to give thought together to the progress report of the Secretary-General on this very important question of the prevention of armed conflict. We welcome the commendable efforts to promote dialogue made by the Department for Political Affairs in drafting this report.

At the 2005 world summit, Heads of State and Government urged the United Nations to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of anticipation and prevention of armed conflict. The report of the Secretary-General reflects the progress made in that respect. We are convinced that the culture of prevention is rooted in the United Nations system and that it is becoming a goal in itself as part of the primary objective of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General is notable not only because of its comprehensive approach but also, and most importantly, because of the efforts made therein to refine the conceptual tools used for analysis and action in this area.

The report examines preventive action at three levels — systemic, structural and operational — reflecting the latest academic thinking in that respect. The integrated vision set out in the report provides for simultaneous and coherent action that takes into greater account all the dimensions of the contexts surrounding, and the catalysts of, the eruption and prolongation of armed conflicts. The analysis contained in the report also provides for a series of measures conducive to developing synergies aimed at mobilizing capacities in the framework of the common commitment to meet challenges in the area of prevention.

The prevention of armed conflict is now rightly understood as the overriding responsibility of Governments, a responsibility that should be met both individually and collectively in the context of the promotion of more effective democratic and economic governance at the national and international levels. The initiatives taken in that same spirit to translate into reality the social responsibility of corporations to reduce the threat of armed conflict represent a positive response to the crucial question of the illegal exploitation of natural resources and its well-known consequences, inter alia.

My delegation has taken note in particular of the call for States' participation in international regulatory frameworks. International instruments must be seen not as mechanisms that censure or limit the action of Governments, but as instruments of cooperation and solidarity that promote the ideals shared by the United Nations and the Member States. In the same vein, mutual assistance and cooperation networks should be established to facilitate the implementation of those instruments and to promote the dissemination of good practices in this area. Among other things, that will increase the potential for setting up closer links between the Community of Democracies and the movement of new or restored democracies.

The strengthening of mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes has made much progress — especially in Africa — within the context of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the area of international peace and security. We believe that the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a unit Secretariat to centralize the knowledge acquired in the field of preventing armed conflict is an altogether worthy initiative. We hope that this can become operational as soon as possible. We agree with the Secretary-General that it will have a crucial role to play in designing integrated strategies for the prevention of armed conflict, as called for by heads of State or Government of Security Council members when they adopted resolution 1625 (2005) during the summit-level meeting held on 14 September 2005.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the Secretary-General's functions in implementing preventive measures — especially preventive diplomacy — require that steps be taken to increase the Secretariat's capacity for analysis. The Secretary-General should also be able to draw upon a pool of eminent persons of demonstrated moral authority to guide and support his good offices. That will require the mobilization of sufficient human resources for regular follow-up of political developments in various parts of the world that are prone to outbreaks of armed conflict.

Where they exist and are operational, we should capitalize on regional and subregional early warning mechanisms. It is important to establish effective communications in that regard, which will entail strengthening United Nations regional offices. In that context, we should also examine the principle of preventive diplomacy and consider having greater recourse to special political missions. Similarly, it is important to create a more regular mechanism for the work of the United Nations to promote dialogue about the prevention of armed conflict.

We support the principle of making official the Group of Friends on conflict prevention. My delegation believes that making dialogue more official and continuous is a requirement that flows from an awareness of the utility of preventing armed conflict and of the stakes involved. It is a matter of saving human lives. Dialogue should be expanded to include all actors involved in prevention activities within the United Nations system, for that will provide for greater coherence among the various actors working at various levels of engagement and responsibility.

We believe it is crucial to mobilize sufficient financial resources to develop United Nations mechanisms in the area of conflict prevention. My delegation fully supports the proposal to earmark 2 per cent of the peacekeeping budget to the prevention of armed conflict. That proposal should be considered during the budgetary discussions to be held during the sixty-first session.

In that regard, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to draw the international community's attention to the need to increase resources to the Secretary-General's fund to assist developing countries that have taken their disputes to the International Court of Justice with the cost of those proceedings.

My delegation believes that the issue of preventing armed conflict should be kept on the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in order that we may further consider the proposals and recommendations of the Secretary-General in the context of the other reports published recently on related matters, such as the report (A/61/204) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1631 (2005) on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the area of international peace and security and the reports on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to promote the prevention of armed conflict. We also wish to pay tribute to his colleagues at all levels of responsibility, as well as to all the academic experts involved in discussing and acting on this issue, who have worked very hard to prepare and finalize this report.

Mr. Li Junhua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (A/60/891) on the prevention of armed conflict. Like other Member States, China attaches great importance to the question of the prevention of armed conflict. We very much appreciate the ongoing role of the United Nations in that sphere. Given the comprehensiveness and importance of the report of the Secretary-General, all delegations need more time to study it. China therefore shares the view of the President that the General Assembly should continue to consider this question at its next session.

Regrettably, a small number of countries have raised the question of the Taiwan Strait in their statements. I wonder whether they did so at the instigation of others or out of other designs. The Chinese delegation wishes to reiterate that there is but one China in the world and that Taiwan is an inseparable part of the People's Republic of China. In 1971, during the twenty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2758 (XXVI), which contains clear provisions in this regard. This represents the broad consensus that exists among the overwhelming majority of the countries comprising the international community. I would like to emphasize that the question of Taiwan is entirely a Chinese internal affair that bears no relationship whatever to the prevention of armed conflict.

In their statements, many countries also referred to the Charter of the United Nations and the need to abide by it. One of the basic principles of the Charter is non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States. We therefore believe that raising the question of the Taiwan Strait under this agenda item is inappropriate and unjustified. If those countries are truly concerned about this question, I suggest they read carefully document A/61/263, which contains comprehensive information about this matter and about China's position.

The Acting President: I now call on the Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): Allow me to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his progress report (A/60/891) on the prevention of armed conflict. Among the many significant issues raised in the report, I would like to highlight the following.

First, the introduction of a third sphere of preventive action, namely, systemic prevention, is commendable. It would allow for the adoption of measures to address causes of conflict that transcend particular States. Clearly, the concept is not new, and many measures to curb the transnational causes of conflict are already in place. But to underscore the fight against transnational crime in the context of the prevention of armed conflict is indeed welcome. For one thing, it reminds us that major responsibility for many ongoing armed conflicts lies with international arms traffickers and unscrupulous weapons traders, and that the illicit arms trade is, more often than not, funded by drug trafficking and the illicit trade in precious materials. In this sense, systemic prevention would mean fighting the root causes of armed conflict and, indeed, of all forms of violence, including terrorism.

Secondly, my delegation wishes to welcome the recognition given by the report to the important role of faith-based organizations, and of religious leaders in particular, as agents of change and peaceful coexistence. The Holy See would like to reaffirm that its institutions throughout the world are constantly engaged at all levels in promoting a culture of peace and understanding, as well as in fostering post-conflict healing and reconciliation.

Furthermore, regarding the use of sanctions in support of preventive diplomacy, my delegation assumes that the international community already possesses a good amount of knowledge on this issue, as sanctions have been employed in a number of recent cases. It would have been desirable for the report to touch on the limits of sanctions for humanitarian reasons and on the need to limit sanctions to specific items, such as arms and certain financial operations. In fact, some cases have shown that the first victims of sanctions are the victims of the violence against which such sanctions are supposedly aimed.

Finally, the report states that in the area of conflict prevention the gap between rhetoric and reality remains unacceptable. Indeed, at present, operational mechanisms and legal instruments effectively to prevent armed conflicts are largely already in place. What seems to be needed is the political will to implement them in a consistent way and in all regions of the world where symptoms of tension surface and threaten local and international peace and security.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/60/L.61.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.61?

Draft resolution A/60/L.61 was adopted (resolution 60/284).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 40

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Draft resolution (A/60/L.60/Rev.2)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.60/Rev.2.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): First of all, allow me to express our delegation's sincere appreciation to the President of the General Assembly and to delegations for their patience and understanding, since consideration of agenda item 40, "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan", has been twice postponed.

In 1972, this body, by its resolution 2994 (XXVII),

> "Reaffirming the responsibility of the international community to take action to preserve and enhance the environment and, in particular, the need for continuous international cooperation to this end" (*first preambular para.*),

designated 5 June as World Environment Day.

This year in Azerbaijan, the commemoration of that important date was overshadowed by alarming news about fires in the occupied territories. Early this June, the first series of massive fires occurred in the eastern part of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, in particular in the mountainous terrain and plains of the districts of Aghdam and Khojavend. The satellite imagery of those districts obtained by Azerbaijan in mid-June 2006 and presented to the international community fully confirmed the initial observations and estimates. At the time, the size of the fire-affected areas had reached more than 130 square kilometres. Satellite images of the massive fires have been circulated by our delegation as an enclosure with our letter contained in document A/60/911, dated 28 June 2006.

Early in July, the fires spread to other occupied territories: the districts of Fuzuli, Jabrayil and Ter-Ter, an area totalling more than 160 square kilometres. Seriously concerned, the Government of Azerbaijan officially requested the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to send a fact-finding mission to those territories to assess the damage inflicted upon the environment and prepare a report. The fact-finding mission visited some of those territories from 3 to 5 July and submitted a report, which confirmed the accuracy and credibility of the information provided by Azerbaijan. In its conclusion, the mission stressed the lack of proper firefighting equipment on both sides, an insufficient water supply and — this is of particular importance — the need for international assistance.

Meanwhile, the situation on the ground has been deteriorating severely. Our most recent observations confirm that the fires are continuing to burn and have spread dramatically.

Time is running out. In June, the fires damaged an area greater than 130 square kilometres. By the end of July, more than 300 square kilometres had been damaged, with more than 600 square kilometres damaged by the end of August.

What deeply concerns us is the continuation of the fires and the fact that they have been taking place in territories where the Azerbaijani population will eventually return. These fertile areas, once flourishing and cultivated by Azerbaijani farmers, have been turned into a burned desert in less than two months. Fire has totally destroyed whatever remained of the plundered villages, farms, schools, fields and orchards, making those territories unsuitable for living in. Severe damage has been inflicted upon the environment of those territories, seriously undermining its fragile ecosystem, including the soil and the flora and fauna. Apart from the immediate and very evident impact, there will be serious long-term negative consequences.

What is urgently needed now are comprehensive measures to suppress the fires, eliminate the impact of the environmental disaster and rehabilitate the fire-affected territories of Azerbaijan. As far as the practical matters of the environmental operation are concerned, Azerbaijan reiterates its preparedness to second its experts in the fields of emergencies and environmental protection to participate actively in this operation and to contribute other resources which might be required for its successful conduct.

With that in mind and following consultations, Azerbaijan once again demonstrated a constructive, flexible and action-oriented approach, drastically revising the original text of draft resolution A/60/L.60 into A/60/L.60/Rev.1, focusing on purely humanitarian and environmental aspects.

Meanwhile, we have received further requests from the co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to continue working on the draft resolution with a view to achieving a consensus text. Over the past few days, intensive consultations have been conducted, during which enormous efforts were undertaken in order to reach a compromise text and to avoid a vote on the draft resolution.

In that connection, I would like to express our appreciation to the representatives of the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in particular the United States delegation and especially Ambassador Alejandro Wolff, for their willingness and their valuable efforts to help us, the delegations of Azerbaijan and Armenia, to bridge the gaps with regard to the draft and to reach a consensus text. Acting in the spirit of compromise, the delegation of Azerbaijan demonstrated the maximum flexibility in order to accommodate every concern. As a result, an agreed consensual text was issued as draft resolution A/60/L.60/Rev.2. In addition, I cannot fail to mention the efforts of the Armenian delegation.

The draft resolution welcomes the readiness of the parties to cooperate in the environmental operation to be urgently conducted with the assistance of the

international community and considers such an operation to be an important confidence-building measure. Interested in the earliest possible suppression of fires and in rehabilitation of the fire-affected territories, Azerbaijan is ready to cooperate with Armenia on this matter, particularly to create proper conditions for the environmental operation. Such action will make it possible for the operation to become a significant confidence-building measure. All of that will demonstrate the true intentions and good will of both Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that the General Assembly will adopt by consensus the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.60/Rev.2.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): The Russian Federation, France and the United States of America, as the co-Chair countries of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), remain committed to promoting a peaceful, negotiated resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. In that capacity, we take with great seriousness concerns raised by either side to the conflict regarding threats to the security and stability of the region, as well as any developments that pose new obstacles for the negotiation process.

Accordingly, we have examined closely the information provided by the Government of Azerbaijan regarding fires in the eastern part of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan surrounding Nagorny Karabakh. We also note the report of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, who, at the request of the Government of Azerbaijan and at the direction of the Chairman-in-Office, has carried out a monitoring mission to the affected areas. We note in particular that fires of both natural and man-made origin are a regular occurrence in the region. The question of whether this year's more extensive fires are a cause for ecological concern requiring international attention to their suppression is one that can be answered only through a technical examination of the situation.

Therefore, the co-Chairs stand ready, together with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, to lend their immediate assistance to the organization of an OSCE mission, with the support and expertise of the United Nations Environmental Programme.

We commend the spirit of goodwill demonstrated by both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in particular by their Permanent Representatives, in agreeing to cooperate to address the situation raised through this resolution. We hope that the agreement reached today reflects a new readiness on both sides to engage in further measures to build confidence that will advance the process of negotiations. We will redouble our efforts, through the OSCE's Minsk Group, to promote such activities.

We note that over the past two years the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group have worked intensively with the Foreign Ministers and the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to identify core principles of an agreement that would lead to a just and lasting settlement. Our nations, reinforced by the voices of the Group of Eight nations at their summit in Saint Petersburg in July, have called on the Presidents of both Armenia and Azerbaijan to now accept these core principles as a basis for resolution of the conflict and to prepare their publics for peace. Today we reiterate that call and restate the readiness of our Governments to lend full support to the achievement and implementation of a peace agreement.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): The draft resolution at hand addresses an issue that we thought had been brought to a close two weeks ago through discussions with the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Minsk Group co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. A decision was taken to send a mission of experts under OSCE auspices to assess the fires. The authorities of Nagorny Karabakh had already accepted that proposal, and Armenia was certainly ready to use its good offices to facilitate such a mission. It was our understanding that Azerbaijan had also agreed.

Given all that, it was surprising to see a draft resolution on this issue circulating at the United Nations, especially since it called for a parallel mission under United Nations auspices. That approach was unacceptable to Armenia. We considered such a step to be an obstacle to continuing negotiations and, since it was clearly intended to pursue other political ends, Armenia opposed the motion. However, as a result of our consultations with the Minsk Group co-Chairs, we have come to an agreement on a text that simply reiterates support for the OSCE mission. In that regard, we would like to welcome the readiness of all the

parties to negotiate in the spirit of compromise under the able and very effective mediation of the Minsk Group co-Chairs.

Nevertheless, although we support the contents of the agreement, we continue to remain opposed to the general idea of this agenda item and to a United Nations resolution under it. That is why Armenia dissociates itself from the consensus on this resolution.

Mr. Kryzhanivskyi (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the GUAM States: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

GUAM member States are seriously concerned about the massive fires in the eastern part of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The satellite images distributed by the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan clearly confirm the large scale of the fires. The fires have already inflicted widespread and severe damage on the environment and the biodiversity of the region. In addition to the immediate consequences, that will have a grave long-term impact on the health of the population.

The fact-finding mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that visited the fire-affected territories confirmed the existence of the fires, the lack of proper firefighting equipment on both sides and the need for international assistance in that regard.

The draft resolution before us puts special emphasis on the humanitarian and ecological urgency of environmental operations to suppress the fires and to overcome their detrimental consequences. It also welcomes the readiness of the parties to cooperate to that end and considers such an operation to be an important confidence-building measure.

Naturally, there is a great need for the assistance, expertise and professional knowledge of the organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme.

Therefore the GUAM member States — Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine — consider it a matter of the most urgent priority to conduct an environmental operation and welcome the consensus on the draft resolution.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Pakistan's position on the agenda item under consideration, expressed individually and collectively in the context of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is known. We share the concern over the devastating impact and widespread environmental damage caused by the fires. We therefore sympathize and fully support the central objective of the draft resolution under consideration.

The draft resolution stresses the urgency of conducting an environmental operation to suppress the fires and overcome their detrimental consequences, and in that regard it calls for the provision of all necessary assistance and expertise by the United Nations system.

The readiness of the parties to cooperate to that end, as has been welcomed by the draft resolution, is indeed encouraging and necessary to urgently address the situation. We hope that this spirit of cooperation will be sustained.

The consensus adoption of this draft resolution is therefore an appropriate course of action.

Mr. Ilkin (Turkey): My Government supports a just and lasting solution to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict on the basis of the fundamental principles of international law, the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the relevant Security Council resolutions and good-neighbourly relations.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that Turkey, like all interested parties, supports the efforts of the Minsk Group within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aiming at a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We are convinced that a solution to this conflict, which stands as the most important obstacle to the attainment of lasting stability and regional cooperation in the southern Caucasus, will contribute to the peace, stability and welfare of the whole of this Eurasian region.

We believe that, to overcome the effects of the devastating fires that occurred in the eastern part of the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the parties involved urgently need the assistance and expertise of the international community, in particular that of the United Nations Environment Programme and the OSCE. We believe also that cooperation between the parties is essential to extinguish the widespread fires and to rehabilitate the affected region. We know that Azerbaijan is ready to launch this joint effort. We sincerely hope that this joint endeavour will constitute an important confidence-building measure

and will add momentum to the political process led by the OSCE co-Chairman. We therefore welcome the draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.60/Rev.2.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.60/Rev.2?

Draft resolution A/60/L.60/Rev.2 was adopted (resolution 60/285).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Azerbaijan, who wishes to make a statement.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I apologize for having requested the floor a second time.

At the outset, I should like to express our appreciation to delegations for their support. However, it is more than astonishing — given the positive results achieved, and at a time when it seems that both the Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations, as a result of the very important efforts made here in New York and in the respective capitals, have, for the first time in United Nations history, finally come up with an agreed text — that the delegation of Armenia has disassociated itself from the consensus.

The delegation of Armenia disassociated itself from the consensus despite its agreement on and acceptance of the consensus text, which was negotiated in direct, good-faith, intensive and difficult but ultimately productive consultations over the past 48 hours, with the active participation of the United States. It is, at the very minimum, dishonest and inappropriate.

This resolution offers a unique opportunity to work on establishing real confidence-building measures and trust. It is in Armenia's own interest to follow up on its declared readiness, which has now been welcomed by the General Assembly, to actively participate in this environmental operation and to fulfil all other obligations emanating from the resolution just adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): I, too, should like to thank all representatives and countries for their support of this resolution and for their contribution to this effort.

Armenia has been very consistent in terms of its policies and the steps taken within the United Nations regarding this resolution. Armenia voted against the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the fifty-ninth session. Armenia withdrew from the consensus during the rollover of this agenda item from the fifty-ninth session into the agenda of the sixtieth session.

I want to emphasize once again that, despite the fact that we support the content of this resolution, we have serious problems with its title, and we remain opposed to the general idea of bringing any Nagorny Karabakh-related issue to the United Nations.

That is the position of my Government, and that is the reason why Armenia has disassociated itself from the consensus on this resolution.

At the same time, I want to thank my Azerbaijani colleague for his concern regarding the problems of Armenia.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 40.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I would like to inform members that there will be a plenary meeting tomorrow afternoon, first to take up the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, contained in document A/60/999, under agenda item 116, and then to take up agenda items 46 and 120 to consider a draft resolution on the Peacebuilding Fund, contained in document A/60/L.63, and a draft resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, contained in document A/60/L.62.

Thereafter, the Assembly will take up the report of the Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee on item 32 concerning peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, contained in document A/60/478/Add.2.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.